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AMONG ENGLISH HEDGEROWS

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AMONG ENGLISH HEDGEROWS

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WRITTEN AND ILLUSTRATED
BY CLIFTON JOHNSON
With an Introduction
by
HAMILTON W MABIE

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An English Lane

THE stranger who would form a correct opinion of the English character must not confine his observations to the metropolis. He must go forth into the country; he must sojourn in villages and hamlets; he must visit castles, villas, farm-houses, cottages; he must wander through parks and gardens; along hedges and green lanes; he must loiter about country churches; and cope with the people in all their conditions, and all their habits and humors.

Washington Irving.

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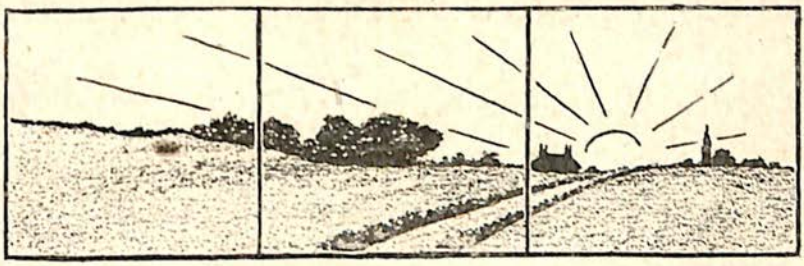

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Introduction

IRVING'S "Sketch Book" was one of the first successful essays made on this continent in the field of literature, and its charm lay quite as much in its choice of themes as in its felicity of style. The new country had cut the political ties which united it with the old country, and was on the point of asserting its intellectual independence. Emerson's striking address on The American Scholar, which Dr. Holmes has very happily called "our declaration of intellectual independence," was not delivered until 1832; but that independence was really achieved by Irving, Bryant, and Cooper more than a decade earlier. The new nation began then to turn its gaze away from Europe toward its own future; but in thus formally asserting its right to live by its own insight and for its own aims, it was severing neither the racial nor the spiritual ties which bound it to the mother country; in assuming the privileges of an independent career, it was putting itself in position to enjoy and love the older world in a nobler fashion.

In that old world all the roots of its life were planted; and when the sights and sounds of English landscape and city street began to fade from the memories of living men, the skill of the writer who could recall those vanishing scenes found a recognition which had in it a touch of personal tenderness for the old places and the old days. There is a race memory as well as an individual memory, and the country in which a race has once lived, whose fields it has tilled, and whose cities it has built, can never be quite unfamiliar to the children of its makers. When Irving recalled the old-time habits and places he touched a chord which instantly responded; for Westminster Abbey and Stratford-on-Avon and the peal of Christmas bells and the good cheer of Christmastide in hall and cottage were recollections of childhood to the people of English descent on this side the sea.

And from that day to this the writers who have known and loved the ripe beauty and the rich life of England have never lacked readers. Both writers and readers have often been critical of their kin beyond seas, and have not been slow to speak out of a frank mind the things which make for honesty if not for peace; but below the current of sharp speech there has always been a deep feeling of kinship. Americans are quick to feel the charm of the English country, not only because it is so unlike their own, but because

it once was their own. It is still, as one of the truest literary artists who has ever described it has happily called it, Our Old Home.

And this home is nowhere more homelike than in its quiet roads and rural villages. Mr. Johnson has given us the keynote of his book in the words of his earliest predecessor in this charming field: the stranger who would form a correct opinion of English character, wrote Irving, "must go forth into the country; he must sojourn in villages and hamlets; . . . he must wander through parks and gardens; along hedges and green lanes; he must loiter about country churches; and cope with people in all their conditions, and all their habits and humors." So brief has been our history that there still lives in Stratford, or did live until very recently, an old man who recalled Irving's visits to his father in the days before the charming account of Shakespeare's birthplace had set the tide of travel flowing through Warwickshire. So long, on the other hand, is the story of man's life in England that traces of successive civilizations are rarely out of sight, and a thousand years is as a day in the memory of a race which was afield and at work when Christianity was making its way through western Europe. It is the ripeness of forgotten countries which gives the English landscape its rich and characteristic charm; the charm of ancient repose, of deep and tranquil beauty, of long-

continued and loving care of soil and tree and vine. Men have put their vitality into those sweeping meadows and gently sloping hills for so many generations that something humanizing has passed into the earth and made it companionable.

And what men could not do the climate, generous in the elements of fertility, has done. "England is like the margin of a spring-run, near its source," writes Mr. Burroughs in his discriminating study of the English landscape; "always green, always cool, always moist, comparatively free from frost in winter and from drought in summer. . . . The spirit of gentle, fertilizing summer rain perhaps never took such tangible and topographical form before. Cloud-evolved, cloud-enveloped, cloud-protected, it fills the eye of the American traveller with a vision of greenness such as he has never before dreamed of; a greenness born of perpetual May, tender, untarnished, ever renewed, and as uniform and all-pervading as the raindrops that fall, covering mountain, cliff, and vale alike."

This quality of repose and ripeness, — as if nothing had been made, but everything had grown with as much indifference to the flight of time as the embowering ivy and the deep grasses suggest, — is on the long lanes and the tranquil villages. Mr. Johnson's title could hardly have been chosen more happily; for it is among the hedgerows that one sees and hears the most char-

acteristic beauty of England. A long walk between the hedges, across wide meadows, behind clusters of village homes, under wide-spreading trees, puts one in the way of intimacy with the country and the people. If it is at dusk, in the early summer, there comes the passionate note of the nightingale which always arrests one with a sense of its pathos as if it had never been heard before; if it is at noonday, from some neighboring meadow the lark swiftly rises into those soft skies from which its notes will soon fall like rain. In the long village street there has been time to ripen all manner of quaint and individual folk; the people whom Mr. Hardy has described with such freshness and fidelity in those classics of English rural life "Under the Greenwood Tree," "The Woodlanders," and "Far from the Madding Crowd." Into this world, so unlike our own and yet so much akin to ours, Mr. Johnson has gone with a friendly eye, a hearty sympathy, and a very intelligent camera; and his record betrays at all points that love of his field and his subjects which is the prime characteristic of the successful painter of rural life and country folk.

HAMILTON WRIGHT MABIE.

Among English Hedgerows

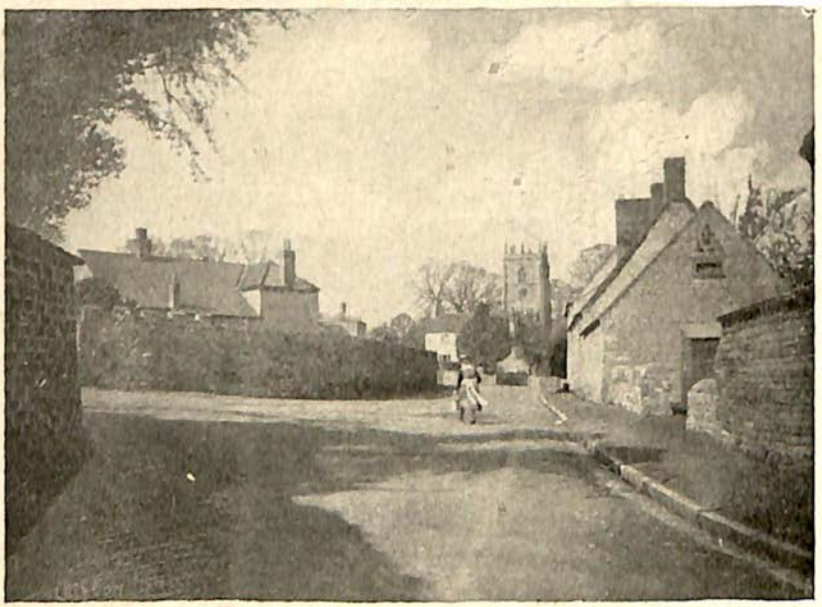
I

A RURAL VILLAGE

IT was the first week in April that I reached England. I came thus early in the season that I might be sure to see Nature unfolding her greenery and scattering her blossoms over the fields and woodlands from the very beginning. I did not linger in the town where I landed, but went at once inland to a little village in one of the southern counties which I shall call Sedleigh. There I made my home for several weeks.

The change from the bleakness of America just emerging from the frosts and snows of winter when I left it and from the tossing seas to the tranquil freshness of the English spring was a delightful one. The weather was mild, the grass was green, and in sheltered nooks the first flowers were opening their eyes. But, aside from this spring awakening of buds and leafage which would be beautiful anywhere, the country had a gentleness of aspect that was new to me. It

was astonishing how velvety the grass-fields all looked, and how soft and rounded all the outlines of the landscape were. In part this gentleness comes from the



An English Village

kindly climate and the easy decay of the chalky, underlying rock, but a considerable fraction of the country's pastoral mellowness is the result of the long subjection of the earth to the hand of man. Spade and plough have been chastening the land and wearing away its roughnesses for centuries past.

The village I was in seemed to me the prettiest place imaginable. It was like a story-book made real. The

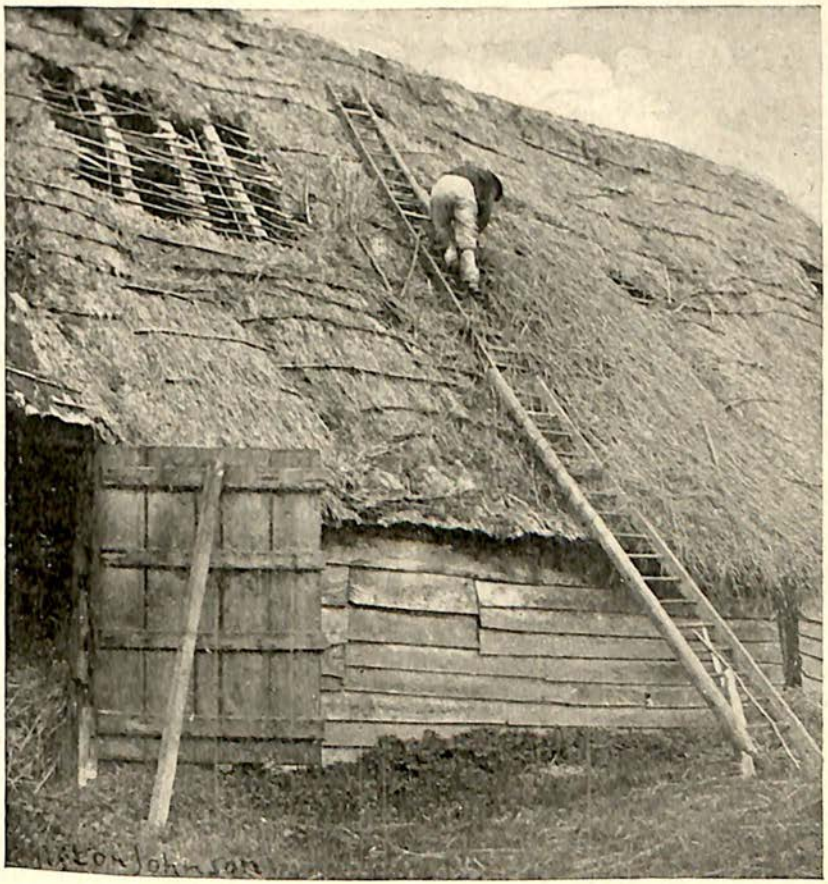
trees, the hedges, the high stone walls, and the old houses with their queer little windows and their roofs of tile and thatch were all charming. I had not thought human beings could build a collection of houses so delightfully and naturally picturesque.

Most of the homes of the hamlet were dotted thickly along a single, narrow, irregular street. Others were scattered at lengthening intervals on the lanes that wandered away into the fields. The village's chief

Old Cottages

highway had a stone-paved walk bordering one side, but the walk had such a cobbly roughness that it was like doing penance to travel on it, and, except in wet weather, every one kept to the middle of the road. Some of the houses hugged the street so closely that their doors opened directly on it with no space intervening. As a rule, however, there were a few yards of separation, and a tidy walk led to the house entrance from the gateway in the substantial wall or fence that shut the home domain away from the street. Along the paths and housewalks were many flowers and shrubs and vines. The tradespeople usually allowed themselves the luxury of a bit of lawn before their dwellings, but about the cottages of the laborers all the spare space, except for the narrow strips reserved for flowers, was spaded up and planted to vegetables.

The Sedleigh roofs were in the majority of cases tiled, but there were still many of old-fashioned thatch. The latter were the more attractive, for they had softer outlines, and were, in tone and form, very like a growth of nature. When a building is first thatched, the straw of the roof has a thickness of eight or ten inches, but after this first coat gets leaky fresh thatch is put on over the old, and in spite of a certain amount of trimming the roof gradually grows more ponderous. An old roof a foot and a half or two feet thick is nothing uncommon. The little dormer windows keep



Patching the Thatch Roof of a Barn

receding with the successive thatchings till they are almost hidden from sight. The straw is laid very evenly, and the only binding that shows is some wooden thongs along the eaves and the ridge. On

many buildings the thatch had been so long unrenewed that it was mouldy, caked, and ragged, and was covered in its more shadowed parts with a thick growth of moss, variegated with sproutings of weeds and grasses.

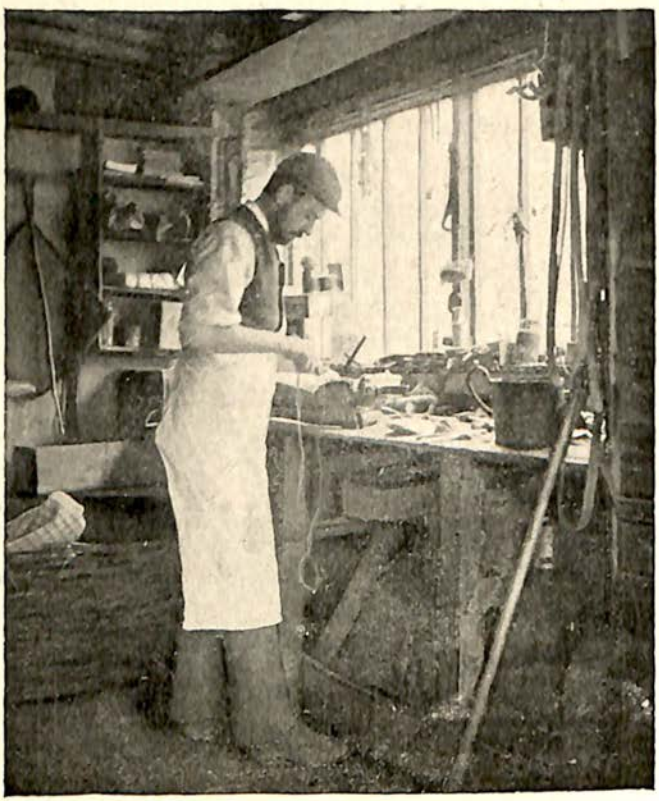
In noticing the Sedleigh village houses, and indeed those everywhere in Britain, the thing that impressed me most in the architecture as compared with that in America was its air of stability. What the English build they build to last. Houses two or three hundred years old are to be found in every village, and their heavy walls of masonry seem likely to endure forever. The same sturdiness of construction characterizes the churches and other public buildings of England. You find it, too, in the bridges across the rivers — even in those over the little brooks in the fields; they every one span the streams in strong, graceful arches of brick or stone. For the most part the architecture is tastefully simple and takes its place in the landscape with little or no sense of artificiality. Yet there were exceptions. Some of the more modern of the Sedleigh houses were stiff and bare and even ugly, though fortunately there were not enough of these to mar the general harmony and repose.

The average cottage interior is dismally shabby and its furnishings meagre. The rooms at the disposal of any one family are few and small, and you find in

the best of them little beyond the bare necessities for housekeeping of the most primitive sort. The kitchen is naturally the heart of the home. It is the one living-room. Here the family eat, do all their work, and entertain their visitors. It has a rough floor of stone or brick, and its ceiling is simply the boards and beams of the chamber floor above. The feature that does most to relieve its air of poverty is a display of crockery always kept in full sight on open shelves; and this array of tableware receives its crowning touch in a row of mugs and pitchers hung on nails driven into a beam just above. You wonder that there should be so many of these latter articles, but it seems to be a point of pride among housewives to have plenty of mugs and pitchers, whatever else they lack.

The cottage chimney is pretty sure to be of the broad, old-fashioned type that expands below into a wide, deep fireplace. You find these antiquated fireplaces everywhere, only they have been adapted to modern requirements by filling in the lower half with a sort of combination stove and grate. Stoves of the American pattern are a rarity, and these rude grates, choking the mouths of the old chimneys, are almost universal. They did not seem, from my point of view, to be very serviceable for either heat or cooking purposes, but they were cheerful. The glow of

the fire was always in sight, and there was something very pleasant about a cottage kitchen on the edge of



The Harnessmaker

evening, with the light flickering out from the grate into the semi-gloom of the room.

Though English houses are practically all of brick or stone and the walls of the older ones often nearly two

feet thick, they are not as tight and warm as the average house in America. The frosts gain easy access, and there is a good deal of winter discomfort in the humbler houses.

The English have a conundrum which questions, "What color is the grass when the snow is on it?"

The correct answer is, "Just the same color it is in summer."

They know nothing of the faded browns and yellows with which we are familiar in the late autumn and early spring. Sharp freezing weather is rare, and the grass never loses its green. When they have snow, it only lasts a few days as a rule, and if there comes a whole week in which the ponds are frozen so that the ice will bear a person's weight, the winter is thought to be remarkably cold. Yet, at its mildest, the season has a damp chilliness that makes it much more disagreeable than our dryer, colder weather; and no one loves it.

The gentry had only two representatives in Sedleigh,— the vicar and a retired banker. The banker's house had a long frontage on the chief street, while the vicarage was just across the tiny village green adjoining the quiet old church. Of tradespeople the community had its full complement. There were two shops that sold about everything one of our country stores would, and there was a blacksmith's shop, a harnessmaker's shop, a shoemaker's shop, a carpenter's

shop, a plumber's shop, a butcher's shop, a baker's shop, and one or two little shops where sweets and ginger beer were for sale. Last and busiest of all, there were three drinking-places, one of them known as a hotel, and the other two as inns, while all three had the general title of "publics" or "pubs."

Nearly every one on Sedleigh street had one or two black pigs housed in a little pen in the garden, though in some cases the pigs were allowed the run of a grass-field. They had good care, and the children associated with them and petted them quite like members of the family. The boys would bring home sacks of leaves from a near beech wood for their bedding and gather weeds along the roadside for them to eat. I often saw the pigs driven through the streets, or their bloody corpses borne along on a litter on the way to the butcher's shop.

One evening I saw a little group of children playing at pig-killing. They had a rope tied around one boy's hind leg, and he was scrambling about on hands and knees and squealing very naturally. They had a litter, a pan, wooden saws, and knives, and it was all very realistically horrible.

Almost every English village has an idiot among its inhabitants. Sedleigh had two. One was a man of middle age named Johnny Phipps. He was a queer, short-stepping man, always stubbing along rather has-

The Postman at the Blacksmith's

tily in his vacant way as if intent on business. He spent much of his time on Sedleigh Common, where he knocked stumps to pieces with his pickaxe; later he brought the chips down the hill to his home in a bag.

The other weak-minded one was a young girl with a great neck and a crude-featured, coarse, red face. She could not talk plainly, and she could learn nothing, but she liked to be with the other children at school. There she would sit among the infants and imitate their motions and mumble indistinctly when they recited.

Caste feeling is marked even in the smallest villages. Lines are sharply drawn between the different grades of society, and there is so much class jealousy and isolation that the social activities of a community, as a whole, are apt to be halting or stagnant. Among people on the same level cliques and gossip and more or less formidable animosities are common. For instance, certain laborers' wives will for a while get into the habit of being particularly friendly with each other. They will pop into each other's houses at all hours. If they want a pinch of salt, they run for that, or a loaf of bread, or a little tea, they run for that. Perhaps they sit and talk in the kitchen for half the morning, and it is very likely noon before the visitor bethinks herself she must go home to get dinner. So they get to know too much, in time, and a secret is let out. Then there is a row, and they call each other every-

thing but their Christian names, and keep themselves to themselves and won't speak when they meet. But presently the trouble fades, and they are "as big friends and as big fools" as ever.

The English, when they want to travel on foot anywhere — to a neighbor's, or to adjoining villages — are apt to go, not by road, but by the footpaths. These tiny paths ramble all about through grass-land and ploughed fields, across wheat patches, and hop gardens — everywhere. They may go straight down the middle of a field, cut across it diagonally, merely clip a corner, or take off a narrow slice by keeping all the way along its borders next a hedge. When the field is ploughed the path is usually turned under and has to be trodden anew.

On all these paths time has given the people a right of way, and it is useless trying to force them out of one. The attempt has sometimes been made, but the people will tear down obstructions and fight for their right if need be, and they always have the support of the courts.

England has very little forest land; in some counties almost none. About Sedleigh there were frequent woods of a few acres each on the steep hillsides, and occasional smaller woods on the levels, while the fine mansions had many little patches and avenues of great trees on their grounds.

A landscape as seen from a hill is all checkered with many-shaped fields of varied greens and browns. In color it impresses one as several shades darker than the American landscape. The trees, in particular, as compared with ours, are full-foliaged, compact, and deep-tinted. Everywhere are the tangled lines of the hedges, the thin, dusty stripes of the footpaths, and the wider, more regular lines of the roadways. A continuous bank, two feet or more high, skirts the highways on each side. Hedges crown the banks, and sprout in such thick tangled growth, that one can rarely find a gap he could push through with any comfort. Bank and hedge together come up shoulder high at the lowest, and you feel much shut in when you walk.

One thing that impresses an American is the heavy build of English vehicles. The wheels are broad-tired, the hubs large, and a sturdiness right through is characteristic of them that comes close to the borders of clumsiness. Two-wheeled carts are the commonest vehicles, whether for farm work or for light driving. When one team meets another, both turn to the left, but two people who meet on foot will each keep to the right. The custom that teams have of turning to the left, I was told, was good sense, in that the driver, who sits on the right-hand side just as with us, is better enabled to watch his wheels, and see that they

do not collide with those of the teams met. In the rugged regions of the Black Forest in Germany, teams turn to the right as they do in America; and there they reason that it is better so because each man can

A Chat on the Road

thus watch his outside wheels and see that they do not go over a precipice. The turning of foot-people to the right is a custom descended from less-civilized times when every gentleman carried a sword. Keeping to the right left his sword-arm freer for offence or defence, as the case might be.

One day I came across the village carpenter at work in his garden and stopped to chat with him. He

was wearing his white apron. All the tradespeople wear aprons, and they never trouble to take them off while they are about home or on the village streets. Like all English gardens, the plot the carpenter was working in was very tidy and attractive. Every inch was dug over and utilized, except for the narrow paths, some of greensward, some of gravel. The carpenter's shop was close by, at one side of his house. It was a queer, shackly old place, with its front set half full of glass. There was litter all about, and there was litter inside ten feet deep. Elbow room in the crowded interior seemed to be entirely lacking.

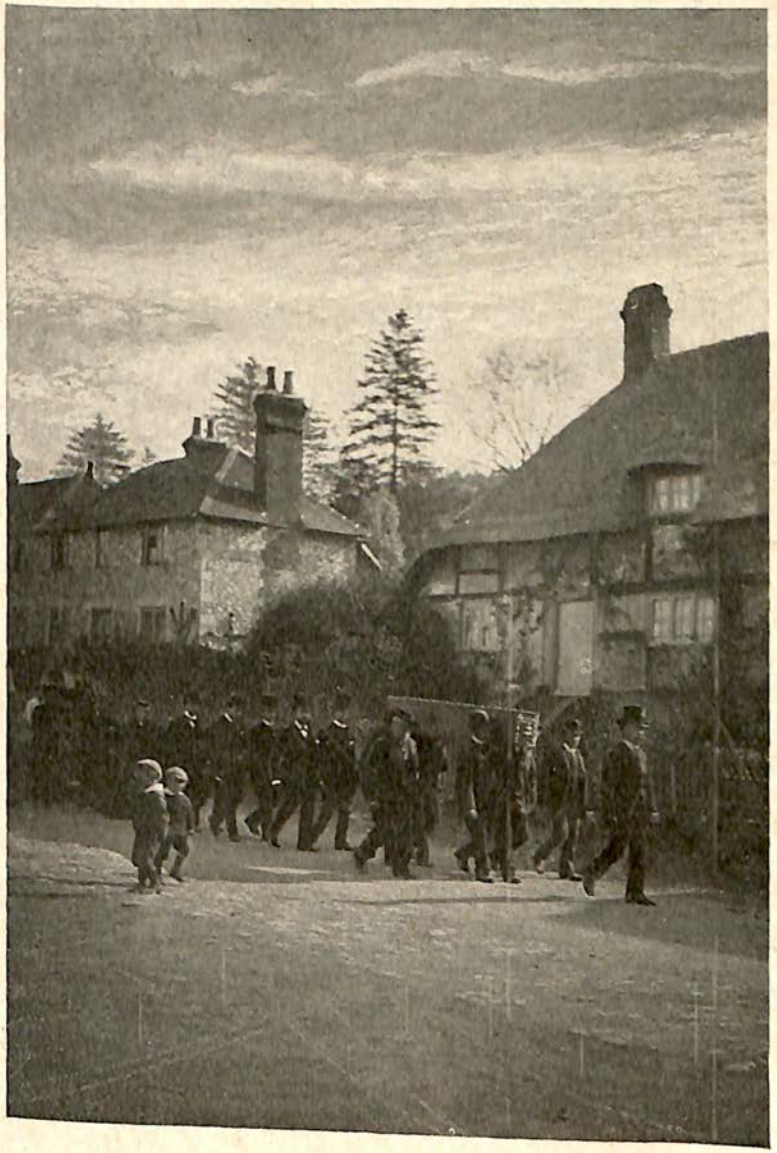
Amongst the rest of the lumber here stored was a full supply of material for coffins. Making coffins for the village dead is one of the specialties of the English country carpenter. Only one style of coffin is in ordinary use. It is of oiled elm studded all around the edges and borders of the lid with black-headed nails. It has no further ornament save the six black handles, one on each end and two on each side, and a thin metal plate on top with the name of the deceased painted on it. The lid is without glass, and the coffin is not enclosed in another box. Show or expense are felt by the English to be out of place, and they think it best that dust should return to dust quickly rather than lingeringly. The coffins are of the broad-shouldered "coffin shape," not casket

shaped, as with us. They are padded, and lined with thin calico. The funeral furnishings of the gentry are likewise very simple, only their coffins are made of oak and have fittings of brass. Children's coffins are covered with blue cloth and have tin handles that shine like silver.

When a person dies, the church bell tolls at intervals of five minutes, one, two, or three strokes, for an hour. One stroke means a child, two a woman, three a man. The tolling is repeated at the time of the funeral, and is a signal for the unoccupied women and children of the village to gather near the church gate to look at the procession that will presently appear.

It is the custom after a body has been laid in the coffin at the home to invite the neighbors in to see it. This is a real gratification to most of the visitors, and they comment and say to the mourning household, "How nice the corpse looks."

No service is held at the house, but only in the church and at the grave. Laborers at a funeral wear white smocks, often handsomely stitched and gathered about the shoulders. These long, blouse-like garments are picturesque and serviceable. They were once universal in the fields, but few men wear them about their work now. A long jacket called a "slop" and other nondescript garments have taken their place. On



A Funeral

the Sunday following a funeral the bearers and relatives of the deceased attend church in a body. Aside from the expense of the coffin there is the parson's fee and the fee for the gravedigger. If a headstone is put up, there is an added fee of a sovereign, and practically none but the upper classes mark their graves.

I found lodging while in Sedleigh at the single small hotel known as "The Black Stag." Its chief business was the selling of drink. There were people at the bar talking, smoking, and drinking most of the time, and a crowd gathered in the taproom every evening. Nearly every one drinks in such a place as Sedleigh. Even the women and children are included among the drinkers, though they take only the lighter liquors as a rule. "I drinks," said Olive, the Black Stag maid, "but I don't get tight. I don't take rum. Me and the other girls just drinks stout." Stout is a mild liquor made from burnt malt.

Aside from this maid the hotel family consisted of Mr. and Mrs. Newtley and two daughters, Beatty and Daisy. Daisy was a schoolgirl of eleven. She was pretty, modest, and attractive. When spoken to by a stranger, she seemed half frightened, and hesitated for an answer as if almost minded to run away. In two years she would be through with school and would be waiting on the bar.

Beatty was well along in her teens and was an expert

barmaid. It was during my stay that she and several other village girls drove to the nearest large town with the vicar, to be confirmed. They all wore white dresses, white gloves, and little white lace caps, with streamers of the same material. It was a great occasion and worried Beatty half sick. To prepare for confirmation she had to do a lot of Bible study, and hunt up answers to theological questions propounded by the vicar. One question was, "What is the backbone of the catechism?" The family hunted the Bible through, but had no better idea of what this backbone was than they had before.

Mrs. Newtley was usually to be found working in the kitchen, though she helped Beatty more or less at the bar. Mr. Newtley's headquarters were at the stable. He took care of such teams as stopped, worked in the garden, and did a good amount of loafing and chaffing with friends and customers. But in the busy hours of the evening he presided behind the bar, with Beatty for assistant.

Some "cheap-Jacks" came one afternoon to Sedleigh and took possession of one end of the hotel barn. They put up a rough counter, and on that, and the walls round about, which they drove full of nails, they made as enticing a display of their goods as was possible. They had all sorts of household wares and knickknacks, and every article was priced

at sixpence ha'penny. They had posters in colors to tack up on the barn doors, and circulars for distribution. The children from the street and the school all crowded around the tables as soon as the cheap-Jacks arrived, and viewed operations with great interest, and every child had to have a circular to take home. The two young men in charge kept up a constant run of small talk with each other and the onlookers as they worked.

Such bazaars as this are common. They move from village to village, and stop in each place about a week. This one called itself, "The Mammoth English and American Trading Corporation," a name that was mostly wind; for the goods, I was told, were nearly all made by unpaid convict labor in Germany.

The Jacks spent the larger part of their time during the day in loafing. Customers came mostly in the evening. Then the space in front of the counters was crowded, flaring lights hung here and there, and a bevy of village lads were chasing around the hard earth yard. Several young men cracking their rough jokes hung about the doorway, and heads of families gathered seriously before the counter and spent a great deal of time looking and thinking before they bought.

II

A VILLAGE WORTHY

IN my stay in Sedleigh I became very well acquainted with the sexton of the established church. He was an old gentleman named Taplow who had served twenty years in London as a policeman and was now a pensioner. He had a little house on the other side of the street a short distance from my hotel.

One evening when I called I found Mr. Taplow with his elbows on the small table in the centre of his kitchen, reading a circular left by a travelling doctor. He passed the circular to me with the remark that this doctor could cure "about everything but the wagging of a woman's tongue."

"I told my wife that," said he, "just before you come in, and it got me into trouble in no time."

Mr. Taplow was always getting off some joke of this nature. He was a stout, slow old gentleman with aged blue eyes, a soggy nose, and a bald head fringed round the edges with wisps of gray hair. His broad

face was framed with a semicircle of beard growing in a thin line far back under his chin. He laughed a great deal, and when he laughed, he laughed all over. It was an eruptive, wheezing, gurgling sort of a laugh that was almost coughing. But he was a different sort of man when performing his duties as sexton at the church. At such times no official could be more staid and solemn.

The Taplow kitchen was a mere box of a room with two of the prettiest windows imaginable. One was very wide and deep, with dainty square panes, and the broad sill was set full of plants. The other window was only less pretty because it was smaller. At one side of the room was a dresser full of old fashioned dishes, and next it a tall clock; and with the numerous other furnishings, the little room was very much crowded.

From a black beam which crossed the ceiling was suspended a row of ten large handbells. These ran from low tones to high like a scale of music, and Mr. Taplow struck them with his cane to show me that one could play tunes on them if he only knew how.

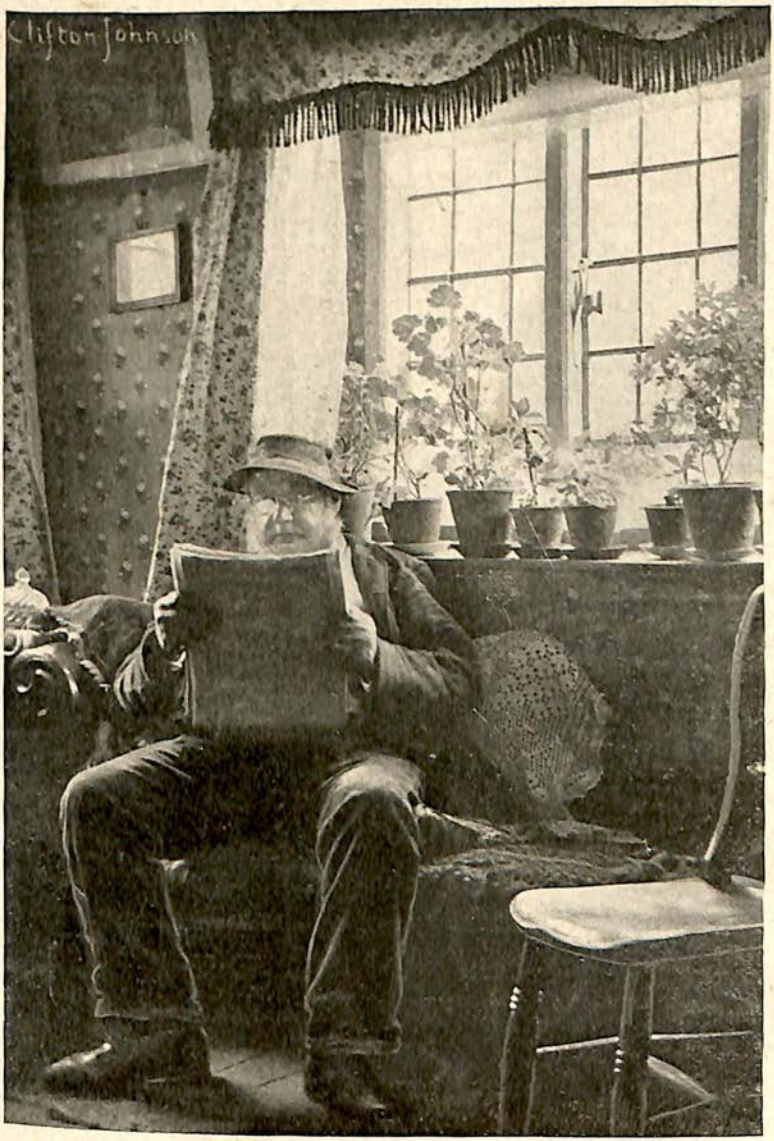
Five men rang the chimes at the village church, and this row of bells was for their use when at Christmas-time they made a tour of the parish to collect their rates. Armed with the bells, one in each hand, the five men went the Christmas rounds, visiting in turn the homes

of the subscribers to their rates, and in front of every house-door rang on the bells the various tunes they had been practising for two or three weeks beforehand. They not only collected their dues, but were treated to refreshments in which beer and certain liquors of a more vigorous nature figured prominently. The result was that some of the bell-ringers got as drunk as "fiddlers" before the tour was completed.

Mr. Taplow was alone in the kitchen this evening, but I could hear his wife rummaging about upstairs. Presently she came down and passed through into the back room. She was a thin, sharp old woman with a nature so prim and precise that Mr. Taplow's easy-going ways were a great trial to her. The lady's countenance, as she snapped the back room door behind her, was very glum, and I was not at all surprised when she called Mr. Taplow out and gave him a scolding. But he took it cheerfully and asked her to come in and let the gentleman have a sight of her — "He'll be pleased to see a cross woman, I'll be bound."

In a few minutes Mr. Taplow returned to the kitchen, chuckling and winking sagaciously. He said he "liked to have a little dig with her now and then. She scolds me well and then is sweet as sugar right after."

The trouble to-day had to do with the fact that early in the afternoon his wife wanted him to plant



Mr. Taplow at Home

potatoes and she told him he was lazy. He would as soon plant the potatoes as not, he said, but to be called lazy so stirred his wrath that he wouldn't do anything the rest of the day.

It is not to be inferred that this was a fair example of life in the Taplow home, for I usually found Mr. and Mrs. Taplow as comfortably content with the world and with each other as the average of folk. Even when he got off one of his favorite jokes at the expense of women in general and of Mrs. Taplow in particular, it made no disturbance as a rule. I remember he told her once in my hearing, that a woman was simply "a piece of useful household furniture." Mrs. Taplow made a vague attempt at wit in reply and did not lose her good nature. She was helping him on with his necktie, and it was rather a pretty picture to see her care for him and his joking fondness for her.

Mr. Taplow was often reminiscent, and the story of his life ran in this wise: "I was born here in this village, and I went to a private school here when I was a boy. The schoolin' cost sixpence a week. Those in the same class would set on the same bench, boys and girls together. So it come natural to go to pokin' fun and crowdin' up agin the gal that set next you. But if we got too sociable, the master'd ketch us at it. The master carried a stick in his arm, and if we

didn't behave, crack it went! Yes, if you got out of the square, he'd drop it over your nob very sudden. Sometimes he'd throw it at you. Then he'd say, 'Now, Robert, bring that to me;' and after he'd got you out on the floor he'd tell you to touch your toes, and as soon as you got stooped over he'd hit you from behind.

"After I got through school I sloped (ran away) to Portsmouth and forgot all I knew. A few years later I went up to London and got took on the police force and then I pretty soon married. My wife was an educated woman, and we used to read together spare time. She taught me all I know. She'd been brought up by a lady that educated her for a governess — only she happened to stumble across a reprobate like me and didn't accept the position that was made for her.

"We had two sons. My wife took more interest in the oldest one than in the youngest, and we gave him the best education and he turned out the worst. He got a position as stockbroker's clerk, and things went well enough for a time. But he dropped into curious company, I suppose, and got a blot put upon his name. I haven't heard from him these twenty years. He wrote and said he was going to Liverpool, and that was the last word that ever come from him. My youngest son is one of the heads in a printing

establishment on Ludgate Hill there in London. When I go in to see him I can't call him 'Bill' — he's too tony for that; I have to say '*Mr.* Taplow' to him just as I would to any gentleman.

"After my wife died I married my present wife, who is the sister of my first wife. There's a foolish law that says you shan't marry your deceased wife's sister, and the vicar we've got here found fault with me for marryin' as I had. But I told him not to meddle with my affairs, and that if I was to lose this one and there was another sister in the same family I'd marry her, too."

Mr. Taplow spent a good deal of time standing in his doorway watching the sights up and down the street, chatting with people who passed, and calling out remarks to the man who lived over the way. He usually leaned against the doorpost, with a short pipe in his mouth, and often had the company of a sober maltese cat named Charlie, which sat dozing on the brick steps at his master's feet.

Several times a day Mr. Taplow plodded over to the hotel to get a mug of beer. If no one was in the bar to wait on him, he gave the floor a dig with his shoe. In part he did his drinking at home, and once or twice each day I would see him travelling across the road from the public, carrying a small pitcher at a careful perpendicular. If I called at his

house just afterward, I would find him lunching on bread and cheese on the bare boards of the kitchen

A Mug of Beer from the Inn

table, with the pitcher at his elbow. At the close of the repast he filled his pipe from the broken jar that held his tobacco on the mantlepiece, and the atmos-

phere of the room would soon become so heavy and redolent that I would take my leave.

One of the most interesting of the stories that Mr. Taplow told had to do with an experience of his in cleaning his chimney. He had been saying that boy sweeps have not been allowed to go up chimneys of late years. Chimneys put up now are too small even for a boy to climb through, and they have to be cleaned with a machine. But great numbers of little fellows used to be employed at this work. With a short-handled hoe and a brush the boys would wriggle up the flues, "and when they got to the top," said Mr. Taplow, "they'd poke their 'ead out and 'oller, 'Swe-e-ep!' They'd be black as that pot on the hearth there when they come down.

"That reminds me of the time when we lived in Portsmouth," he continued. "The Missus had been grumblin' and grumblin' about how we'd got to 'ave our chimney swep', and I said, 'Why don't you stop your grumblin' and call in a sweep?'

"But she only kep' on grumblin', and one day I thought I'd try my 'and at chimney sweepin'. The old gun stood in the corner, and I took it and poked the muzzle up the chimney and fired. I was like to be smothered. The soot come tumblin' down and covered everythin'. You couldn't see the fender, and it was settling two inches thick way out on the other

side of the room. I thought I had better make myself scarce."

"Yes," commented Mrs. Taplow, "and he did. He went off through the next room, leavin' great black footprints all the way and shakin' hisself at every step."

Mr. Taplow was chuckling with huge enjoyment over the remembrance of this episode when the tall kitchen clock chimed eight. That brought him promptly to his feet with the remark that it was "clock-winding time."

But he looked toward his wife, not toward the clock, and she fumbled in the bureau drawer and handed him some small coins. He slipped the money into his pocket and got his cane and hat preparatory to stepping across to the hotel taproom.

"He spends more than half his money over the way," said Mrs. Taplow, deprecatingly.

"I have a Missus in London," was Mr. Taplow's response — "a woman they call 'Vic' (Queen Victoria) and she never finds fault. She sends me all the money I need. If I can't live on Vic's annuity, it's time I stopped living." Then he stumped away to get his beer.

One evening an old man of the village who had been a lifelong friend of Mr. Taplow's walked away from his cottage across the fields to a little pond, waded in, and committed suicide. Search for him was made

next day, and his body was found in the little bush-bordered pond.

Every village tongue was set a-wagging then, and there was no detail too small or harrowing but that its relation had eager listeners. All who could saw the

Mr. Taplow digging the Suicide's Grave

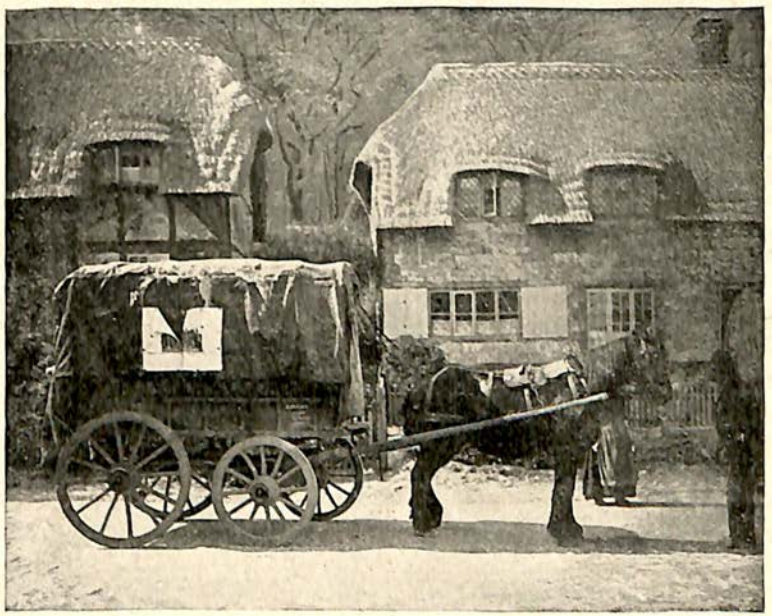
corpse when it was brought home, and some of the young women who missed the sight were very sorry they had been deprived of so interesting a spectacle.

The suicide was a drinking man, but it was generally thought that he had been ill-treated in his home, and there was a story that the night before he drowned himself his daughter and her husband had tied him down on the floor. The sympathy of the villagers was with him, while his relatives were very heartily condemned by public sentiment.

Mr. Taplow, as sexton, dug the suicide's grave. I found him at this work as I was passing through the churchyard and stopped to speak with him. The part of the churchyard where he was digging was newly laid out, and was nearly vacant. The old churchyard, which was only separated from the new by a path, had been dug over and over again. People had been buried in that one small plot for a thousand years, and very few graves had ever been protected by headstones. The mould was full of bones, and at present a body was rarely interred there without encroaching on the long-forgotten grave of some former occupant. Mr. Taplow said, the last time he dug there, he brought up the bones of five bodies, and when he had finished excavating, he put the bones in the bottom of the grave and covered them with dirt. But he told the vicar, and the vicar said it was time to stop, and had this new plot added to the old.

The village carrier took it on himself to gather contributions toward getting a wreath for the suicide.

This carrier went twice a week to the nearest large town, in a great covered cart. He picked up a few



The Carrier and his Cart

passengers among the laborers' wives and daughters, and he carried parcels and did errands. The wreath he bought was very much admired. It was made of some unearthly artificial flowers in a glass case. There were many of these cases on the churchyard graves, and I suppose the flowers thus protected kept their unnatural freshness for years.

The suicide's family were not altogether pleased with

the consideration shown the dead man by his neighbors, and they were inclined to be spiteful. They said they would have no flowers put on the grave, and they would not have the muffled chimes rung for him, either. But old Daniel, the suicide, had been a bell-ringer, and his friends were bound the muffled chimes should be rung, and they were rung. The flowers were put on the grave, too; but, for fear they would be stolen or injured, they were kept inside the church the first night.

Not long after old Daniel's burial, I left Sedleigh, to be away for several weeks. On my return, the first bit of news I learned at the Black Stag was that Mr. Taplow was no longer sexton. They said that one day when there was to be an evening prayer meeting, he had drunk too heavily, and, as a consequence, had so prolonged his afternoon nap, that he was an hour later than he should have been about starting to attend to his duties at the church. No bell had been rung, and the people all came straggling in very late. The vicar had to light the lamps himself, and he was just on the point of beginning the service, when in comes Mr. Taplow and goes to the tower and tolls the bell. That was too much for the vicar, and he turned Mr. Taplow off.

I had a chance to interview Mr. Taplow on the subject, a little later. He was leaning against the

door-jamb of his little porch, just as if he had not moved all the time I had been away. He had his customary beer-soaked odor and serious tone, and the same deep, coughing chuckle.

I started to ask him about his retirement from his duties as sexton, but as soon as he had done shaking hands, and got his intellect focussed on me, he said, "I want to introduce you to a young lady that's now stopping in the village;" and he went on to tell me that she was a fine lady from Glasgow, and that he had told her about me, and she wanted to meet me, and that her husband, who had been one of the Scotch gentry, was dead. She came down to Sedleigh every now and then and spent a few weeks in a cottage that she owned and that he had the care of. Yes, she was a very fascinating young widow, and he wanted me to make love to her — he would help me along all he could and give me a recommend. She was wealthy, and he didn't think I could do better.

He informed me casually, as he dwelt on the virtues of the lady, that she had treated him that day to "a glass of dew off Ben Nevis" — in other words, to Scotch whiskey — and I thought possibly this fact explained his amorous plottings. About his "resignation" as sexton Mr. Taplow said: "The vicar was having some special services that week; and the time we had this trouble — I'll own I'd had an extra glass

or two — it was my pension day (the day when his quarterly remittance arrived and which he naturally celebrated by taking a drop more than on ordinary days). I'm not ashamed to own my faults — yes, I'd been having a little extra. My Missus was away that evening, and I had to light the lamps and do all the things of that kind at the church alone. She never came till I was all finished, and then I up and says, 'This is a nice time for you to come after all the work's done.'

"The vicar was there, and he heard me, and he says, 'That's not the way to speak to your wife, and in the church, too;' and then he gave me the sack (turned him off). I talked back to the vicar, and when we got through he said he'd give me two days to beg his pardon — I could have my place again if I'd do that. But I won't bow the knee to no parson nor to any other man. I'm independent of them all. If I was to go begging his pardon, I'd expect my old daddy would rise up out of his grave before me and give me a licking."

Mr. Taplow seemed to be rather pleased with the way he had carried himself in this exploit, and he used very mild tones when he told what he said to his wife and very gruff and stern ones when he repeated what the vicar had said to him.

Doubtless he left out some important points in the

story. He took considerable comfort in the fact that when he resigned, the church clock stopped and stood still a whole week and they had to send to Allscott for the clockmaker before they could get it going again. The clock was old and queer, and he was the only man in Sedleigh who understood it. Said Mr. Taplow, "Old Timothy Abbott, who was clerk and sexton for many years before me, told me the secret of it. He cautioned me not to tell any one, and no more I never did."

III

AN EVENING WITH A NIGHTINGALE

SEDLEIGH, like every other English hamlet, was the home of great numbers of sparrows and swallows that had nests in the village roofs and chimneys. As long as daylight lasted the air was full of their twittering and chirping while the songs of countless other birds were heard in the fields and woods and the scattered trees and bushes round about. The domestic rooks loitered in the pastures and on the cultivated farm-lands all day; the daws hovered about the church tower; groups of blackbirds made hasty flights from tree to tree; lapwings cried in the fields; skylarks climbed far up toward the clouds; and every lane and roadway was enlivened by the presence and the music of the lesser feathered minstrels of all kinds. They were everywhere, and the carols and the choruses and the constant sight of flitting wings made every pleasant day pleasanter still; but I was not satisfied till I heard that queen among English birds — the nightingale.

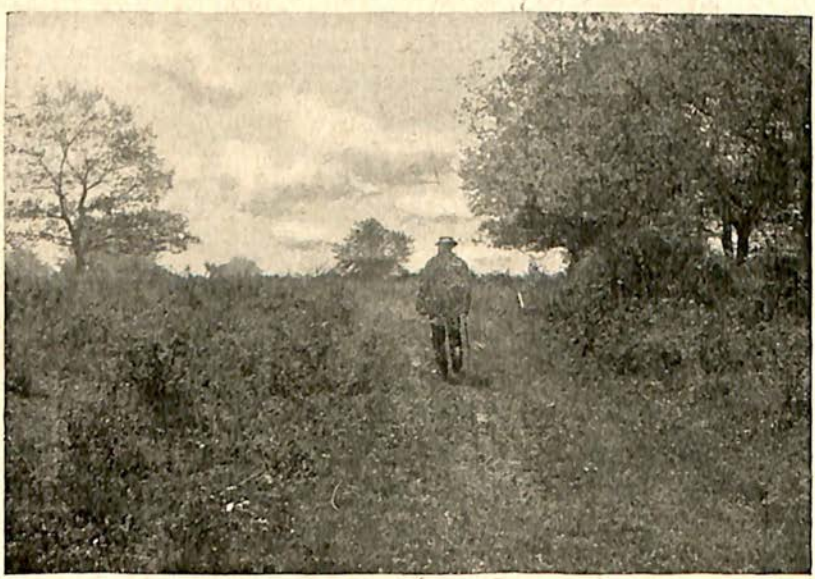
May came. The hedges turned snowy with the blossoms of the hawthorn, the buttercups mingled their yellow with the white of the daisies in the pastures, the dandelions began to get grayheaded and bald, and the horsechestnut and sycamore trees came into full bloom.

It was on a morning in the middle of the month that I went for a walk with Mr. Taplow. We climbed a path through a beechwood to a broad, bushy pasture hill known as Sedleigh Down or Common. Mr. Taplow had his cane in his hand and he flourished it about to show me how he would deal with a "viper" if we came across one. "I'd like to see one of those gentlemen, now," said he. "I'm that fond of them I'd walk a mile to have a rap at one with my stick."

As we went along he peered into the bushes in hopes of finding bird's-nests. At last, with a good deal of delight, he pointed out the nest of a thrush in a scrubby young apple tree. The old bird was still on, and continued to sit very quietly with head alert, though we were within a few feet of it. When we went on, my companion said, "The old lady didn't take much notice of us, did she?" He had a marked fondness for birds and showed considerable knowledge of their ways and songs.

We returned to the village by a long-disused road,

that led down the northern slope of the hill, sometimes in the twilight of an evergreen wood, sometimes in a pasture dell where the short turf sparkled with daisies. It was almost noon, yet along here we caught several times stray notes from a nightingale's song. Mr. Taplow trod very softly and bent over and craned



On Sedleigh Common

his neck and was at great pains to catch sight of the bird.

He did not succeed, but his interest was aroused and he described the bird's song with enthusiasm and said we must go out again and hear it to better

advantage. He knew a place where the nightingales sang every night and he would like well to take me there some pleasant evening.

A little later in the week I met Mr. Taplow on the street one afternoon and I remarked, "No one could ask for a better day than this, could they?"

"No," was the response, "it couldn't be better if we made it ourselves."

I then proposed that we should go out when it became dark to hear the nightingale. He agreed, and said the best place for them was a mile or so down a little valley that the villagers called "the long lithe."

At eight o'clock I rapped at Mr. Taplow's door. He said he would just step over to the hotel to get half a pint of beer and then he would be with me. When he returned he got his stick, and presently we were following the winding path down the half-wooded valley of the lithe. At one place we climbed a gate, and Mr. Taplow said, "Some people would rather climb a gate than go through it, any time. They say an Irishman will climb a gate even if it's wide open."

A little farther on we passed through the dense gloom of a bit of wood, and Mr. Taplow observed that it was as black as London in a fog.

"What is a real London fog like?" I inquired.

Mr. Taplow replied, "God knows! — and I know. You can't have air more nasty, stinking, and full of smoke. It's darker 'n night. Why, I couldn't see you just across this path in a London fog. They have the gas lit all day and people go around with torches. It chokes you, and if your lungs ain't just right, it finds you out pretty quick."

We heard a bird chirrup just then, and stopped intent to hear more, but no song followed, and after a little we went through a piece of scrubby woodland and on the other side sat on a stile and listened. From near by came the sound of a little brook rushing and tumbling down the hillside, but no nightingale vouchsafed to sing, and again we resumed our walk. The path now kept along the edge of the wood in a pasture, and here we found our bird and heard it pipe and twitter and break into full song. A half-moon shone high in the sky, a dog barked far off, some cattle lying in dark heaps about the dim field made themselves apparent by an occasional movement and by their heavy breathing. Old Mr. Taplow leaning forward on his cane chuckled huskily when the bird made a particularly happy run; I put my hands in my pockets and got myself into small compass, for the evening was chilly and damp.

The bird was not far away in the brushy wood, and its singing was most charming. It trilled and gurgled

The Maid at the Inn

and whistled with many quick and unexpected changes. The song had the freedom and strength of noble music. Some of the notes were of the utmost purity and clearness and they seemed to penetrate into all the region about. The wonder was that a bird with so beautiful a song should sing only in the night. Darkness seems a time for whip-poor-wills, owls, and frogs, and other weird-voiced creatures — not for such dainty music.

But the air was so keen and its dampness so penetrating that we could not with comfort linger late, even if the singing was most beautiful, and presently we plodded along back to the village. Mr. Taplow said he often went down there to Coomb Wood of an evening when he hadn't anything else to do, and sat for hours listening to the nightingale. He took great pride in the bird.

Olive, the maid at the Black Stag hotel, said she had never heard a nightingale. I told her to go down the lithe and then she might. But she replied that she didn't dare to go down the lithe after dark. A man hung himself in an oak tree down there once and they said his ghost still walked the lithe at midnight.

In one of my rambles in Yorkshire I fell in with a man whose shovel hat and long black coat and sobriety of demeanor proclaimed him to be a clergyman. We walked along in company for a time and

in the course of the conversation he repeated this rhyme to me about the nightingale: —

In A-*pril*
Come she will.
In May
She's sure to stay.
In June
She's in full tune.
In Au-*gust*
Go she must.

I think this indicates quite accurately the habits of the bird.

IV

A TALK AT THE SHOEMAKER'S

ONE warm day that was marked by frequent sprinkles which the villagers said were "thunderdrops," I called on the shoemaker. My American shoes had not proved as serviceable as I expected. English roads are hard and gritty and very unkind to footwear. It is astonishing how quickly one's soles are ground off. That may be the reason why the shoes worn in England are so much heavier than ours, and it accounts for the protruding nails with which the bottoms are hobbed all over. In the country nearly every one wears such shoes, even the women and children. They are stout enough to do away with the need for rubbers. Indeed, except in the cities, rubbers, or galoshes as the English call them, are of little value, for one long walk on a country road would cut them through and make them useless.

The shoemaker's shop was a little room at one end of the tiny house that was his home. There we sat,

and while he soled my shoes we talked. We had just begun when a boy from the grocer's came in and left half a bushel of malt. The shoemaker's wife was going to brew beer. In nearly all the village homes the making of home-brewed beer was a frequent household duty and it was drunk by the whole family as freely as if it had been tea or coffee. The shoemaker said his "nippers" (children) were not much at eating, but they were very fond of beer, and he thought it was good for them.

For some reason or other the presence of the home-brew in the family larders does not seem to have any appreciable effect in keeping the men away from the "publics." Comradeship and the clubs will take a man to the inns if nothing else will. The laborers and humbler tradespeople of this village had two or three clubs that met weekly or monthly at an inn agreed on. The objects of the clubs are sociability and mutual insurance. One club was called "The Pig Club," because the purpose of the club was to insure pigs. If a pig belonging to a member of the club is so unfortunate as to die a natural death or come to an end in any other way except by the hands of the butcher, the club makes up the loss to that member.

The chief club of the village has a grand fête day in summer, when there are games, banners, tents, speeches, and a great dinner. The leading tradesmen

The Grocer's Boy

of the place take advantage of the occasion to advertise themselves into favor by giving the crowd a liberal supply of free beer, and no effort is spared to make the fête wholly convivial and joyous. There is a band present, and among other things it always plays the song that ends with the chorus, "Britons never, never, never shall be slaves." My shoemaker said there was something about that piece that went against the grain with him because, "It's not true. I know the Britons are slaves — lots of 'em. I'd like to hear some man get up at the club dinner — some man that could talk — and say, 'I'm quite surprised, gentlemen, to hear the band play such a wrong thing.' It would make them open their eyes, wouldn't it?

"There's a man just goin' past. He's been workin' from early morning, ten hours, for his master. Now he's goin' home to have tea, and work in his garden a while, and then he'll be goin' out again for two or three hours to help his wife, 'op-tying. He and his wife has to work all they can to get along. They couldn't live on their weekly wages. They has to do task work to earn something extra or they'd have to go to the 'Union' (that is, the workhouse. It gets the former name from the fact that several communities now usually unite to maintain a single home for their poor). That man in harvest just slivers into it and works night and day, and the wife helps. The employers! — they don't

A Laborer trimming a Hedge

care whether a man lives or dies, and if they get a man down they tread on him. They can do anything to a man, or to his wife or children — and they does pretty roughish things sometimes — and the man daren't make any complaint. If he does, come Saturday night, there's his wages and he's not wanted any more. Then where's he to go, and where's his next week's food to come from?"

Mr. Taplow happened in at the shoemaker's about this time, and he said, "Yes, these laborers travel from hedge to hedge till they are wore out, and they're so dependent on their master that some of 'em are afraid to say their soul's their own. That's not my style. I'm not afraid of any man. I have my pension — eighteen shillings, tenpence, ha' penny every week, and I just as soon tell a man what I think of him as to look at him.

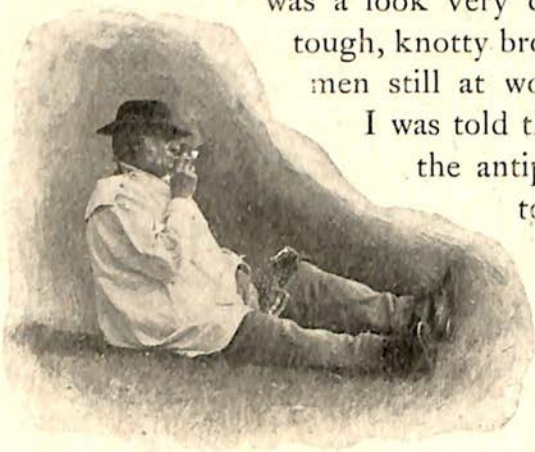
"The laborers, as soon as they can't do a fair day's work, are sent to the workhouse. You can depend on't they don't stay there long before they're brought home in a little four-wheel trap, and buried in the churchyard.

"The workhouse's worse than the grave, to the thinking of a good many of the laborers. There was poor old Tom Christurn that lived down here next to the chapel. He's dead these two years now. He was getting old and couldn't support himself, but he always said he wouldn't go to the Union, and he didn't. The day they came to take him he cut his throat.

"The treatment's not over grand at the workhouse, and they're not overfed there either, and they get no beer or other liquors. Then the men and women, except the older people, are all separated. A man would never see his wife there, only by chance in the yard. The preachers say, 'What God hath joined

together, let no man put asunder'; but they don't pay much attention to that saying at the workhouse."

This discourse of Mr. Taplow's made me eager to see some paupers for myself, and a few days later I had the chance. It was on the occasion of a picnic given to the workhouse folk by a gentleman of a neighboring village. The paupers numbered thirty or forty, the men in dark caps and white smock frocks, and the women in blue gowns and white aprons. They were very neat, yet they had a bleached out, broken-down look, as if capacity and energy were pretty well gone. It was a look very different from the tough, knotty brownness of the old men still at work in the fields. I was told that one reason for the antipathy of the poor to the workhouse is that there a person is compelled to keep clean and be regular in his habits. Cleanliness is a bugbear, and it is a common saying when a man is entering the Union, "Well, he won't last long. They'll soon wash him to death when he gets there."



A Pauper

The gentleman who entertained the paupers in his park had them brought from the Union in several wagons arched over with greens, and at the foot of his lawn he put up a big tent in which was spread a grand feast. After the servants had served dinner the old people left the tent and disposed themselves comfortably on the grass and seats under the trees. Most of the old men gathered in the shade of a great beech, where tobacco and a basket of clay pipes were passed around.

The tobacco was a treat. Men in the workhouse are not allowed tobacco unless their age is over seventy. Even those who have an allowance are not satisfied, and it is the custom for visiting friends to bring along a little tobacco for a present when they call at the workhouse. As for the old women, they complain about their allowance of tea. They are all very fond of the teapot by the time they go to the workhouse, and when friends call on one of the woman paupers they present her with an ounce of tea, a little sugar, and possibly a few new-laid eggs.

While the old people were lounging and smoking, a band of music in red uniforms arrived, and spent two hours playing to the company. The gentleman who was the patron of the day joined in the paupers' celebration to the extent of lunching with a party of friends on the other side of the wide lawn. He

thought the old people would enjoy themselves best if left alone. They were not at all demonstrative; their vitality had ebbed too low for that; but in their way they found it a grand occasion — one to talk of for weeks afterward. Like all good things, however, it had to have an end, and at eight o'clock the paupers were helped into their green-arbored wagons and sent back to the Union, where destiny had appointed that sooner or later what was left of their broken lives should flicker out.

Mr. Taplow, as we talked that afternoon at the shoemaker's, advanced his pet theory that the way to avoid the workhouse was for the young fellows to go into the government service and work till they could retire on a pension. He held himself to be a shining example of the wisdom of such a course, for his life now was practically that of a gentleman of leisure. "I tell 'em," said he, "that they're afraid to leave their mother's apron strings — and they are. They work along for the farmers till they get married, and then they are bound so they can't get away or have independence any more if they wanted it. After a poor laborer marries he's about the same as a slave through life."

The shoemaker's opinion of government service was less rosy, and his strictures on army service were severe. To quote his words, he said: "The young

chaps that go for soldiers are mostly wild and up to all sorts of games. You can pretty near always tell who's

Returning from Work in the Fields

going — it's the uneasy kind that finds our life dull. They want to see the world and have more style than they can at home — and people is apt to say when a fellow goes — 'Oh, he'll do as well as some of the rest to stop a bullet.' The life of the soldier aren't the kind to make a man love hard work, and you can depend upon't that when a soldier comes home after he's been sparring about the way they do, he's not

good for much. Those that serves only a part of their time often comes back and lives on their parents and don't go to work till they has to. There's some of the roughest sort of tramp chaps too in the army that the recruiters brings in, so wild, some of 'em, they don't know what to do with 'em after they've got 'em. The soldiers are a smartish lot and live pretty loose, most of 'em; but there's some that go in business-like and serves through till they gets a pension and they do very well."

A little before I left the shoemaker's, a cat that had been lying on the hearth began to cough, and the shoemaker got up and scared her out with the remark, "They says as that is a sign of sickness in the family when a cat coughs in the house. It's a sign the house-folks'll be havin' colds, as a rule, I thinks; but then colds is at the bottom of all sickness."

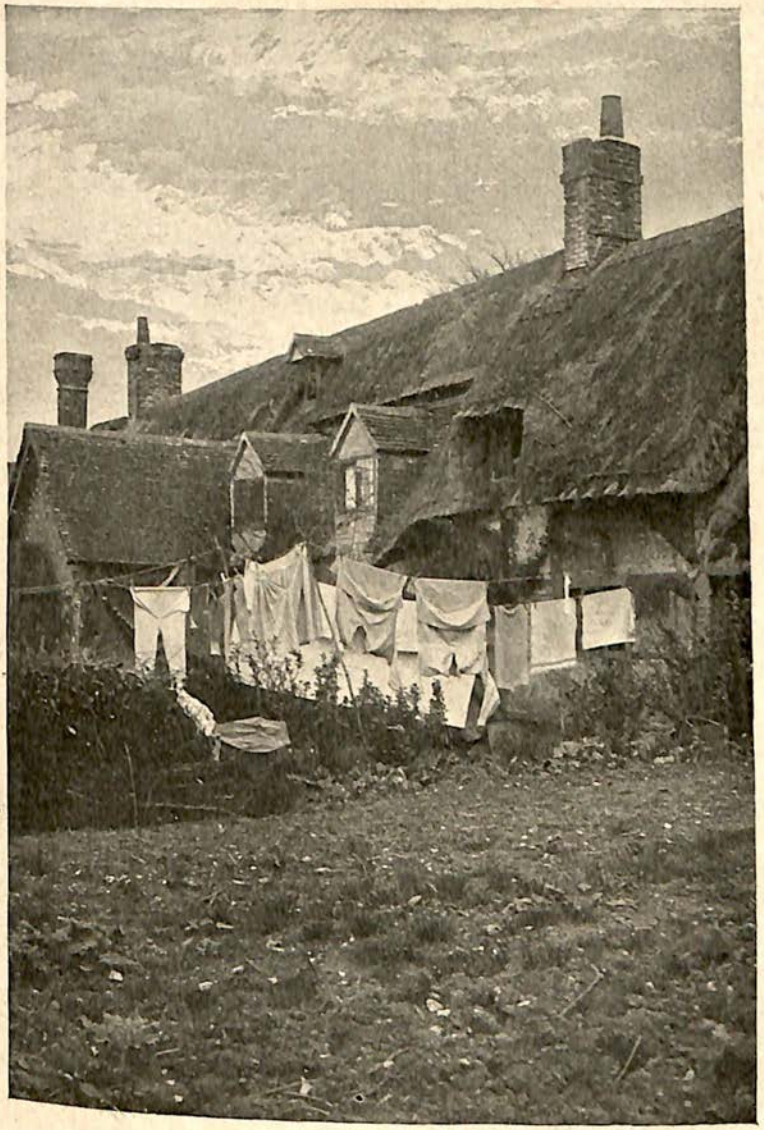
Then he went on to tell of a number of other superstitions of the same sort. For instance:—

"When a spark flies out of the fire at you, that is a sign some one has a spite against you. Spit at the spark, and the spite won't harm you.

"If a robin comes near the house and begins weepin' about, it's a sign of death.

"Where the wind is the twenty-first of March, there she'll be principally till the twenty-first of June."

I asked the shoemaker if he knew of any good wart



A Cottage View on Washing-day

cures, and this led to his relating the following bit of personal experience. "I had," said he, "as many as five or six warts on my hand this last year, and some one told me to wash 'em in the water that they use to cool their irons in the blacksmiths' shops, and say nothing to nobody, and the warts would leave. I didn't believe in it much, but I tried it. I'd go into the smith's shop and dip my hands in as if I was just dabblin' in it, playin' with the tongs or something, and keep on talkin' about things so 't nobody would notice, 'cause you mustn't say anything, or else they won't come off. I did that three times, and in six weeks my warts had gone.

"My Missus had two warts, and when I see what they did for mine, I tried to persuade her to try it, but she didn't have cheek enough.

"Well, they said you could throw some peas down a well — as many as you had warts — and when they rotted the warts would go. So I did that for my wife, and one of her warts has gone now. She's surprised herself about it. I don't know whether I did it or not. Maybe the other pea ain't rotted yet."

To end with, the shoemaker told me of a fairy's house he had seen with his own eyes at Bramdean, a village a few miles distant. The fairy house is a ruin now, he said, but there is no doubt about its having been really built by the fairies. You can see the foun-

dations and parts of the walls. "It is a little, tiny house, and made of little, tiny brick not over half a finger long. It is in a meadow, but no grass grows on the spot where the house is. Near it are the places where the fairies had their little ricks. You can see the stones laid to build the ricks on. In the same meadow are some horses buried with silver shoes on."

I asked the reason of the silver shoes, and he said that horses shod with silver shoes would never stumble.

V

COUNTRY WORK AND WORKERS

A HUNDRED-ACRE farm in England is accounted small. Twice or three times that number of acres only make a fair-sized farm, and those that contain between five hundred and one thousand acres are frequent. The English farmer rarely owns the land he tills; he rents it from the gentry. It is astonishing to an American that the farmers can pay the rents they are charged and live. Even poor soil commands a yearly rental of five dollars an acre, while the best land brings four times that sum.

Farmhouses as a rule stand lonely and neighborless, dotting here and there the wide stretches of open country between villages. The villages themselves are made up of the homes of the gentry, tradespeople, and laborers. There may be a farmhouse or two on the outskirts, but never village clusters, such as we are familiar with in New England, where the farmhouses predominate.

Ordinarily the farmhouse is a large, solid, two-story building of brick or stone. It stands on the borders of a big farmyard, and with the great barns and sheds, the cottages of the help, and the ricks of hay and grain close about, the whole has quite the look of a little hamlet. A part of the yard in front of the house is reserved for a lawn, where are various shrubs and flower-beds. Back of the house are a garden and a

The Farmyard and the Barn

number of fruit trees. Among these are several apple trees, but the English trees of this genus do not have the hardiness and vigor they attain on our side of

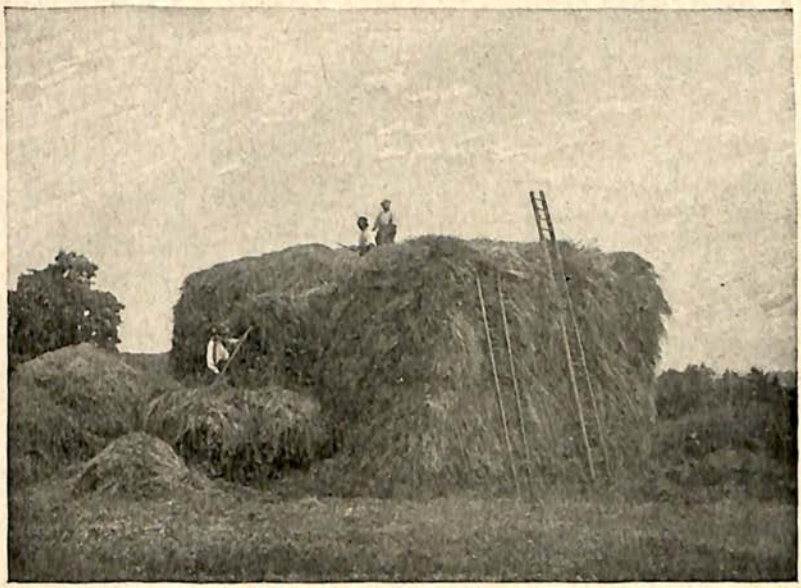
the Atlantic, and you never see large orchards of them.

In one corner of the farmyard, or somewhere about the buildings, is usually a spot full of broken down machinery and other rubbish half hidden in a rank tangle of grass and weeds. In another corner is a pond of what looks to be stagnant and filthy water with apparently neither inlet nor outlet. This is the paddling-place of the farm ducks and geese, and there you see the swallows darting and making sudden dips in the dark water. But its chief purpose is to serve as a drinking-place for the cows and horses. The muddy margin of the pond is always cut up with the imprints of their hoofs, for they are very fond of this water and prefer it to a running brook. Indeed, I was often told that cows thrive on it, and that they give milk of a superior quality if they have a slimy pond in the barnyard to drink out of. The pond is in the lowest part of the farmyard and is an artificial hollow scooped out and puddled with clay. It catches the drainage from the land surrounding and from the farm roofs, and it never goes entirely dry except in severe drouths.

The barns are broad and low and are very apt to be twisted and bent with the weight of years. The eaves, all around, are barely out of reach. Usually the sides are of weatherworn clapboards that at some time have

been tarred. Paint does not last well in this climate, and the man who wishes extra wearing qualities in wooden walls or fences gives them a coat of tar.

The barn roof is either a great expanse of evenly laid straw thatch or an equally great expanse of red tiling or gray slate. The barns do not get the care that is given the houses, and where the roofs are of straw they are likely to be full of holes torn by sparrows for their nests. You never find any barns of the American sort with a cellar underneath and two or three stories above. The gloomy cavern of the interior is crisscrossed with great beams, but it looks vacant. Barns are simply storage places for tools, roots, and threshed grain, with a few rude stables for cows and horses. Hay and unthreshed cereals are stacked out of doors, the latter in the farmyard, the former oftenest in a corner of the field where it is cut. These stacks, or ricks, as they are called, are oblong in shape and broaden out a little from the base upward. They are crowned with roof-like tops of thatch. It is believed to be best to get the hay into the ricks before it is quite dry that it may sweat a little in the mass. A slight fermentation is supposed to improve its quality. The harvest requires nice judgment; for the hay must not sweat too much or it will be harmed, and for a large rick, where the liability to sweat is increased, the hay must



Unloading at the Rick

be dryer than for a small rick. Some ricks you pass in harvest time have a sweet, honeylike odor; others have a sour smell that is apparent at quite a distance. Once in a while a rick not judiciously made will get to smoking, and the hay in the centre will be blackened and spoiled.

Of the laborers on a farm, the ploughmen, carters, and shepherds keep steadily at one kind of work the year through. The rest change their tasks with the changing requirements of the farm and of the seasons. But whatever an individual does, his life is one of

set hours just as much as if he was employed in a factory. When he works overtime, it is by agreement, and he gets extra pay.

At first thought an American would not think it possible for a ploughman to keep at his work uninterruptedly the year through, yet such is the mildness of the climate that snow and frost do not have to be reckoned with seriously. From January to December the ploughman plods the furrows, turning under one field after another, and even if there is a cold snap sharp enough to stop the plough, it is only for a few days.

Ploughmen and carters are up at four o'clock to feed their horses. They breakfast an hour later and are in the fields to begin work at half-past six. About the middle of the afternoon they all return to the farmhouse, the carters in their carts, and the ploughmen and ploughboys mounted side-saddle on their horses that go clanking along in single file till they reach the farmyard gate. The riders slide off, and their horses with those that are released from the carts go down to the pool for a drink and then tramp on to their stables, where they are unharnessed and fed and groomed. This done, the day's work of the carters and followers of the plough is finished.

The soil about Sedleigh was uncommonly heavy, and four horses were the rule to each plough. The ploughman did not attempt to guide his own team, but had a

Ploughing with Oxen

boy to walk along beside the horses and urge them on. These boys earned their wages, I thought, for they kept shouting to their teams all the time, adding emphasis by an occasional crack of the whip. However, the shouts and the belaboring with the lash seemed purely matters of form, and the horses stepped along perfectly oblivious to it, so far as I could see.

To my ears it was a curious jargon that the boys talked to their horses, and after endeavoring in vain to make sense of it I asked for an explanation. Horse language in England I found was quite different from that in the "States," as they call our country. For our "Haw" and "Gee" they say to the front pair of horses "Maether ho" and "Gee woot"; to the rear horses "Jay up" and "Hoot woot." To hasten the team they say "Gee up"; to stop it "Weigh"; to back it "Woot back."

After all, this applies to only one section of England. Horse language varies in different countries just as the dialects of the people do.

In former days much of the heavy farm work was done with bullocks. Now a bullock team is comparatively rare. Nothing could be more picturesque. The oxen, instead of wooden neck-yokes, wear simple harnesses made of broad leather bands, and each creature has on a pair of great leather blinders which gives it a look truly antediluvian. As it takes four bullocks to

one plough, they, with the ploughman and the plough-boy, make a procession that is quite impressive.

In strange contrast with the slow bullock teams, so suggestive of antiquity, one is surprised to find that he cannot travel far in the English country without seeing in some wide field a steam plough at work, or a steam thrasher established next a "corn" rick. Sometimes you meet the engines with all their apparatus in tow steaming along the highway, or they will come rattling and panting right through the midst of the village where you happen to be stopping. They are formidable affairs, and it takes five men to make a working crew.

Every farm has its flock of sheep. In some parts of the country there are moors and commons and rough uplands where the sheep are turned loose to graze. But more often they occupy the ordinary farm fields. Many farmers keep them still farther confined within a basket-work fencing woven from split hazel. These hurdles, as they are called, are made in light detachments that allow them to be readily moved, and as soon as the sheep have grazed one space clean their fence is transferred to enclose new ground. All this was explained to me one day by a shepherd with whom I stopped to talk as he was at his work in a roadside field. Then he drifted into personal reminiscences and said that he had been brought up to tend sheep. He

A Shepherd moving a Hurdle Fence

tried something else for a while but it didn't suit him, and he took up his old work again. He declared that it was the "dirtiest, nastiest, hardest" work there was. None of his eight children would take it up — no, nor any other young people.

"Children goes to school now till they gets to be thirteen or fourteen years old," he added deprecatingly, "and they gets cunning, you know."

The shepherd had a dog with him, but the dog did not know much and never would, in his master's opinion — "wa'n't the right kind." But he "had a dog afore him that was as sensible as a Christian. Seemed like he knew just what I said. If there was some sheep way round that hill you see there, a mile off, that dog'd go for 'em, if I told him to, and I could keep on with my work, and he'd be comin' with 'em by and by. I never had more'n to speak to him or make a motion with my hand and he'd understand. I had him ten year, but he died last January. I wouldn't 'a' felt it so much if I'd lost one of my children."

The shepherd said he had two cousins in America, William and Thomas Cook. He hadn't heard from them in a great while, and he had lost the paper he had their address on and forgotten the name of the place where they lived. He didn't know but I might have been acquainted with them.

A few days later I came on a party of sheep-shearers at work in a barn. The big doors were open, and the men were snipping away on the barn floor with

Women Workers

their shining shears. The bay on one side was full of panting sheep still unsheared. On the other side were the bundles of fleeces and odds and ends of farm tools and rubbish. When a sheep had been relieved of its coat it was allowed to leap away to its mates in the

near field. The shearers work in little bands of six or eight men, and go from farm to farm to do the work through a season that lasts rather over a month. At noon they went out under a tree with their baskets and ate dinner; and while they lunched and gossiped one of them cut a companion's hair with his sheep-shears.

All the heaviest farm work is done by men, but the lighter field tasks are undertaken by women to a considerable extent, though I believe these tasks are always intermittent — never continued week after week the year through. My first sight of women workers was on the new-ploughed grounds of early spring. They were going over the fields with forks and picking out all the witch-grass roots. These they piled in little heaps which later were burned. Their working day was seven or eight hours long and their pay a shilling. They were picturesque, but the close view that showed them to be nearly all old, and stumpy-figured, and slouchy in dress left no room for romance.

Nor were the men workers less rudely rustic than the women. Indeed, it seemed to me that all the English farm-folk by the time they reached middle age became what we would call "characters." In their looks they grow knotty and gnarled and earthy, and this outward appearance is more or less typical of their minds. In features the men are strongly individualized. No two are alike — a result in part due

to the many odd and old-fashioned ways they have of trimming and training their beards. Clothing is quaint, and their heavy footwear, added to their laborious lives, makes the movements of all except the more youthful and vigorous seem ungainly.

As the season advances, the women are to be found in the hop-gardens and in the wheat and hay fields. Wheat, or "corn," as it is called in Britain, is sown in drills about six inches apart, and as soon as it gets well started, the women go through it and hoe out the weeds.

In May, when the hop-gardens are bristled all over with bare, newly set poles around which the vines are just beginning to twine, there are pretty sure to be two or three women in every such field, "'op-tying," as they would say. This consists in fastening the vines to the poles so that they will be sure to climb and not sprawl around on the ground. Most of the women wear wide-brimmed straw hats tied on with handkerchiefs. Each has a long bag fastened to her waist in which she carries the green rushes that she uses in tying. They work very deftly though they keep their tongues going as fast as their hands.

Once in a visit to a hop-garden a worker held her tawny arms out toward me and said, "I s'pose the women don't get browned and burned that-a-way in America! But we've always been at this same work,

Felling an Oak

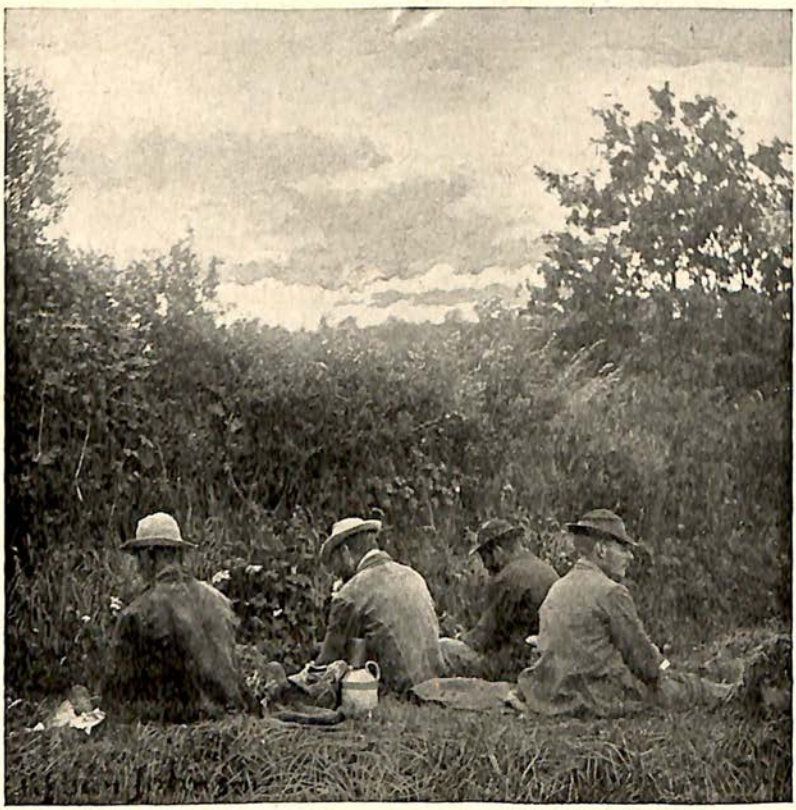
and we'll keep right on at it as long as we've got a breath left."

It seemed to me they were doing the work with unusual celerity. I said as much, and the woman explained that this was because they were paid for the amount they did and not for their time; and she added frankly, "If it were day-work we'd stop that much to talk the 'ops wouldn't get tied in all summer."

Just as I was leaving the hop-garden I heard a tree crash to the earth in a near grove, and when I turned aside to learn the cause I found several men felling oaks. They did this by sawing off the trunks low down almost level with the ground. The stumps left were barely six inches high. Compared with that the two or three foot stumps of America and the great gashes we make in getting our trees down seem very wasteful. The oak bark is sold to tanneries and after a tree was felled the men with their axes, bill-hooks, and other instruments stripped it off from both trunk and branches down to limbs not over an inch and a half in diameter.

The busiest seasons on the farm are those of the hay, grain, and hop harvests. There is employment then for every one. June is the haymaking month, and its scenes have sometimes as much the air of carnival as of labor. This is especially true when the early fields are mown near the villages. On pleasant

evenings half the popùlation is out watching the men swinging their scythes in the slow-fading light. The children are in the new-mown grass having a frolic, tumbling about and gathering up great armfuls to throw at each other. Their mothers watch them from over the fence and laugh at their haps and mishaps.



Eating a "Tenner"

The little ones get hot and red-faced, and some are hurt and shed tears, but it is not easy to induce them to start for home before the men stop work at about ten o'clock.

Most of the mowing in the level regions of England is done with a machine. Yet there are still many old-fashioned farmers who cling to the idea that a machine leaves about as much as it cuts. Such farmers have the work done by hand even if the farm measures half a thousand acres. The smaller farmers often have no machine because they do not feel they can afford one considering the amount they would use it; and on most farms there is a certain amount of land so steep or so much ditched that machine cutting is not practical. The mowing with scythes is done by men who travel in small gangs from farm to farm throughout their home region. As soon as they finish for one employer they go to the next, and so continue till the end of the haying season, when they disband.

I came across a party of mowers one morning eating a "tenner" (ten o'clock lunch) under a hedge. In his basket each man had half a loaf of bread and a large piece of cheese from which he cut off such lumps as his appetite demanded. Each man also had a jug of beer brought from home, and the party had collectively a little keg of ale that was furnished by their master. One of the men went up to the farmhouse

for this at about nine o'clock each morning, and brought it back slung on a stick over his shoulder.

The men, after they had disposed of their bread and cheese, drank two glasses each of the ale from a horn tumbler, and smoked a pipe of tobacco in between. When their half-hour was up, they all whetted their broad blades and went to work again. They told me that, in their opinions, mowing-machines had had their day, and were destined everywhere to be more and more displaced by handwork.

Tedders and horserakes are much less common than with us — particularly the former. Turning and raking are largely done by hand, usually by the women, who also roll the hay into tumbles.

When the work in the hay-fields is well under way on a big farm the operations take on a decided aspect of business and bustle. The most typical haying scene of this sort that I witnessed was in the broad acres of a gentleman's park. There were two wagons, one always at the rick unloading, while the other was in the field. Two horses were hitched tandem to each wagon, and a ploughboy accompanied each pair to drive them. Two men were on the load, three pitched on, and two old men with big rakes followed the load and gathered the scatterings. At the rick were two men unloading, three on the rick receiving the hay as it was pitched up, and two or three others getting

drinks of beer out of the bottles in their baskets that lay under a convenient elm. Two old fellows with faghooks were reaping the grass left by the machines

Whetting their Scythes

along the hedges, two old women and an old man were rolling up the windrows, and a young fellow on a horserake was going leisurely back and forth across the field. That makes twenty people. It was a pretty sight — the busy harvest-field among the great sturdy English elms, with the ivied walls and tall chimneys of "the big house" rising on the slope beyond.

Sometimes the "Squire," the occupant of the big house, comes into the hay-field and takes part in the work. He gets off his coat and pitches on the hay with great gusto for perhaps a couple of hours, chaffs with the men, drinks beer with them, and makes himself as companionable as possible. The men feel that he is a good fellow to condescend to work on their level, and it inclines them to serve him faithfully. But it would not do for the Squire to work every day with them. That would lower him at once in their estimation. The work is beneath him; he must do it only for fun.

The term "harvest time," in England, means more particularly that part of summer when the wheat and other grains are garnered. There is a repetition then of the busy scenes of haymaking. After the harvest the farmer turns his pigs out "earshin" in the stubble fields, where they are allowed to roam six or seven hours each day till they have picked up all the stray ears of grain. Often there are sixty or seventy pigs in a drove with a boy or two along to "mind" them.

Hop-picking begins with the first days of September. By then the blossoming brightness of the earlier months is past, the grain is nearly all reaped, the hay harvested, and the fields are bare and sombre. Yet many flowers still linger along the roadsides, and the hedges are enlivened by the scarlet of hips and haws.

Haymaking

There is much land newly ploughed, and many new ricks are in the field corners looking very tidy with their roofs of fresh thatch glistening in the sunlight.

I was eager to see all that I could of the hop harvest, and one day when I was passing a hop kiln and noticed smoke issuing from its squat chimney, I stopped to investigate. A small door at one end was open, and I went in, but I did not stay long. Three men in the dim interior were feeding the fires with charcoal and brimstone, and the air was so sulphurous I was glad to hurry out to escape choking. I got little notion of the process of hop-drying. The men had pointed to a ladder and said I might go upstairs, but I was already getting anxious for a change of air and refused. Besides, they winked at each other suspiciously, and I think, had I gone up, they would have kept me there till I tipped them. At any rate that is one of the pleasantries that the hop-drier is privileged to indulge with any visitor he can catch in that way. I asked one of the men who followed me to the door where I could see the hop-picking, and he said, "About a mile to the south." I questioned him whether I had better go around by the road or try a more direct way cross-lots. The man replied in the bluff, rude manner that one too often finds among the rural English, "You've got legs, ain't ye? Go there any way ye want to."

I found the pickers at work in a field that sloped down into a little valley. The poles were being taken down as fast as needed, and the pickers were pulling off the hops into great baskets. Men, women, and children were all at work. The old women and the grandfathers were there, and so were the babies, tucked up in blankets and wraps and lying quite contented on the ground among the shadows of the festooned poles. It was a pleasant scene there amidst the greenery, nimble fingers flying, always the voices calling and the hum of gossip, the rustic costumes, the children playing or helping with industrious clumsiness, and in it all the rustle of the vines and the wholesome odor of the hops. It makes a healthy out-of-doors holiday, and

A Group of Hop-pickers

the people flock from far and near into the hop regions to enjoy it. When the journey is short they come in great farm wagons with all their bag and baggage prepared to cook their own food and sleep in barns and sheds. They shout and joke as they go along in spite of the plodding slowness of the journey and the apparent discomfort of the vehicle. The fact that no one is too young to go is attested by the presence of one or two baby carriages dragging along at the rear of the wagon.

A vast army of hop-pickers comes by train from London at this time. They are the scum of the city, a dilapidated crowd of old and young who arrive heavily loaded with their household goods, and make a very motley scene at the railroad stations, bowed with their sacks and baskets.

The wages of a laborer in the poorer parts of England are ten or twelve shillings a week, while in the more favored districts he is paid double that amount. Work begins in summer at six o'clock. At eight the laborer stops half an hour for breakfast, at ten he eats a lunch, and at noon takes an hour to rest and eat dinner. His work is done at five, when he trudges home to supper. Just before he goes to bed he disposes of one more lunch, and the day is ended.

A man could hardly live and support a family on ten or twelve shillings a week were it not that in

summer he always has a chance to do "task work." While this lasts, he works extra hard and over time and earns six or eight shillings a day. He will very likely be out at four in the morning and keep at it till nine or ten at night.

The extra wages a man and his wife make in summer task work are used to buy shoes and clothing. The ordinary wages are pretty much used up in paying rent and in buying the daily necessities of food and drink. The fare is always rough and poor, and a couple of pounds or so of bacon is all the meat a family will eat in a week. Few make any provision for sickness, and when sickness comes, the laborer is compelled to rely on the parish doctor and parochial charity.

Yet in spite of small earnings there are a goodly number among the laborers who save money. With some it is a blind habit, with others it is simply miserliness, and with still others it is ambition. One does not see much chance for hoarding on the wages received, but the thrifty are always on the lookout to save their pennies. Persons who receive parish help are sometimes found to have a considerable sum laid by when they die.

Laborers marry early. The wife has usually been in domestic service, and often contributes the larger half of the scanty ready money that is spent in getting the humble home furnishings. Very little is bought in

the years that follow. A replenishing of blankets and bed linen, when it takes place, is quite apt to be from the charities which are distributed at Christmas time.

It is the rule rather than the exception that the laborer's cottage is overcrowded. Even when there are eight or nine children in a family there may be no more than two sleeping rooms—a condition that is plainly bad both morally and physically.

VI

A FEW GYPSIES

EARLY in my stay in England a party of gypsies with all their belongings passed through Sedleigh village. I hurried to get a picture of them, and then tipped one of the young women of the tribe with a shilling. I thought I had a prize, but afterwards I saw gypsies often, and I gave no more shilling tips. They are not at all uncommon, and the climate favors them, for the winters are not so severe but that they can keep travelling all the year through.

The carts in which they live are much like those of our American gypsies, but are apt to be better and more elaborate. Usually there are two or three carts in a caravan. The women peddle baskets, brushes, clothespins and such small wares, which they make themselves. They are experts in the art of begging and are supposed to do considerable petty stealing.

At harvest and hop-picking time the gypsies hire out to the farmers. They are not rated very highly as help; for they are uncertain and given to drinking

and quarrelling. The more prosperous of them make it a business to furnish amusements at fairs and fêtes, and in their wagons they carry all the paraphernalia for swings, shooting-galleries, and other entertainments of a like nature.

Gypsy Peddlers

One day I came across a gypsy camp in a field just off the highway. As is usually the case with their camp-places, it was on the outskirts of a village. The people were a lazy, slovenly-looking lot. A woman was washing some clothes in a great pan on the ground; two men were spreading out a square of tent cloth to dry on the grass; and others of the clan were loafing and smoking around a little fire.

When I began to move on, about half a dozen ragged children came hooting after me. They said, "Give me a penny, master," and, "I wish you may never want, my lucky gentleman, sir." They were true beggars from head to heel, and they kept up their harrying for half a mile or so.

The next gypsy party that I saw at close quarters was in the old Sussex town of Petworth. They had camped on the village green, which they shared with two or three flocks of geese that wandered about there and apparently made it their headquarters. Three big covered wagons were established at the farther side of the green, and several of the gypsy horses were feeding near by. Close about the carts were a number of men and children. One of the men was cleaning a harness, another was weaving a basket, another was asleep on the ground. The children were lounging or playing. Two roosters and a half-dozen hens were running familiarly about the wagons, and were plainly a part of the caravan. The women had gone to the village on a peddling and trading tour. In response to a question I asked, the men said they had not determined when they would leave Petworth, nor where they would travel with their wagons next.

The spirit of unrest is inborn, and the gypsies rarely stop long at any one place. When they show an inclination to make their visit a prolonged one, they are

ordered to move on by the authorities. Their reputation is not such as to make any one anxious to have them for near neighbors. They are outcasts, and have not a single friend in any class from laborers up to gentry. The latter have a particular grudge against them, because they are credited with being great poachers.

A gypsy with a good long-legged dog behind him is about as undesirable a character in the eyes of the gamekeepers as can be found. You never know what is in a gypsy's pot. It isn't always hedgehog. A gypsy is free to kill hedgehogs wherever he finds them; for it is believed they eat eggs, which is very likely no truer than the old belief among dairy keepers, that hedgehogs sucked the cows when they were lying down in the field. I heard of one gentleman who set apart a certain wood for the use of the gypsies who came into the neighborhood of his estate. They were free to use that wood on condition they did not trespass elsewhere. They could cut tent-pegs, pick up sticks, and catch anything they pleased there, but they mustn't be seen on any other part of the estate under penalty of being expelled altogether.

However often I saw the gypsies, they never lost their picturesque interest, and when I chanced to overtake a troop one day on the road, I thought I would improve the opportunity to follow after and study

their proceedings. Accordingly, I kept along at the rear of the procession for two or three miles, and I suppose I was taken for one of the tribe by those who met us. The chief vehicle of the caravan was a covered wagon of rather fanciful construction, painted blue and white, with a stovepipe sticking up through the roof. A two-wheeled cart laden with baskets and drawn by a diminutive pony followed behind.

When I first sighted the gypsies, the man who drove the wagon was hacking off a lot of grass under a hedge with a sickle, and two small, bareheaded boys, armed with great hook-bladed knives, were assisting. As soon as they saw me they gathered up the grass and thrust it into one of the baskets on the pony-cart, as if in the guilty fear of being detected in stealing. Then the caravan resumed its plodding progress, but the two boys continued to run along the roadside with their hook-bladed knives open in their hands. They were as wild-looking little boys as I have ever seen, and their appearance was the more barbaric by reason of the curious fashion in which their hair was clipped. It was cut close all over their heads save for a long fringe that extended around the front from ear to ear.

In the open door at the rear of the wagon sat a sunny-faced little girl. A part of the time she was whittling with a big knife, and the rest of the time

Gypsies on the Road

visiting with one of the vagrant boys who would cling at intervals to the wagon's shaky back steps. She made him pull bouquets of flowers for her by the roadside which she stuck up in holes in the floor.

At the far end of the wagon sat a woman who was sewing in spite of the jolting motion. A baby was tumbling about in a bunk at her elbow, or creeping out on a table shelf. Once it got its arms round its mother's neck, and then she stopped to cuddle and kiss it.

The man sometimes walked, but more often he sat on the front of his wagon. He spent most of his time urging on his horse in a sleepy way with frequent cuts with his whip, but it was all the same to the horse.

The cart behind was driven by a boy older than the two who were running about. This boy wore a shapeless old hat and he rode all the time. The other two were constantly jumping on and off, and it was a wonder how they could do this with the caravan jogging along all the time, and never tumble and get run over.

VII

SOME ENGLISH PLEASURES

THE first cricket game I attended was played in a great pasture field of close-cropped turf that sloped down to a village whose quaint roofs and stone church tower could be seen peeping out from among the trees that overshadowed them. This field was the scene of a cricket match nearly every Saturday afternoon. On its upper borders, under an oak, was a tile-roofed shed where lookers-on could gather.

The two clubs in the contest that I witnessed were from neighboring villages. All the members were grown men, and there were among them a schoolmaster and two or three of the gentry, including a vicar. The rest were tradespeople. Some of them wore a loose costume of white and had on pads to protect their legs, but mostly the players were in working dress.

At first glance you might think that you were looking at a baseball field. Then you noted the

flat-bladed bats and the three-barred wickets at each end of the field back of the batsman. Behind each wicket was a man to throw the ball. He swings it out at arm's length above his head, something the way girls throw, only not so gently and timidly. It goes like a cannon-ball and is about as comfortable to get hit with.

What the batsman wants to do is to give the ball a long rap so that he and his fellow-batsman down at the other end can get some runs back and forth between the wickets. What the other side wants to do is to have the ball when it is thrown hit the wicket the

A Cricket Match

batsman is protecting, or to catch a ball he has batted. There are eleven players on a side, and every man has to be put out before the opposition can have an inning.

I saw cricket played many times while I was in England, and it seemed to me superior as a national game to baseball. I thought it more spirited and that there was more mental stimulus in it. Everybody played the game, from small boys to gray-haired grandfathers. You would see the children at all hours cricketing in the streets and on the village green, and the older lads practised every day after working hours in some vacant field, while scrub games on Sedleigh Common, to which all the riffraff of the region resorted, were the usual thing on Sunday afternoons.

Back of the Black Stag was a garden and beyond the garden was a little grass field always spoken of, after the manner of the English, as a "meadow." There, of an evening, the young men of the village often gathered to pitch quoits in the slow-waning twilight, and many others of the male inhabitants came, too, and stood about looking on. Most of the players were quite expert, and it was astonishing how close to the mark they would pitch the heavy iron rings.

The ploughboys sometimes played a game on their own account with some old quoits in another part of

Pitching Quoits

the meadow. They had not the strength or practice to fire very straight, and they kept up a continual dodging to get out of the way of the uncertain flying of the rings. They used horse language in the game just as they would at their work. If Dick threw a quoit too far to the left, the others called out to him, "Gee woot, Dick!" or if too far to the right, "Maether ho, Dick!"

This Dick was a fat, brown-tanned, good-natured fellow whom I first saw one Sunday morning lying on the grass near a brook. His home was close by — a great rusty, old building which had once been the "workus" of the place. He was barefoot, and his great clumsy shoes were propped up against a near stone wall. Dick said he had been washing them in the brook, and it was plain he had done the job thoroughly both inside and out. When the sunlight dried them, he was going to black them.

One Friday evening there came a load of men from a neighboring town to play quoits with the Sedleigh men. First they had some drink at the hotel bar, then went down to the field beyond the garden.

A crowd of men and boys gathered to see the game. Most stood, but as many as could crowded on a board seat behind a bench where two fellows were keeping tally. The ploughboy, Dick, watched the sport from a seat on a horse collar that he was taking home from

The Old "Workus"

the harnessmaker's. At the farther side of the field a man was mowing with a scythe. Two small girls came down a lane and hung over a gate to see the game. They were the only feminine observers. Nearly all the men filled and lit their pipes when they came into the field. On the grass a little aside from the arena of contest was a tray full of pitchers and glasses, and at frequent intervals some one would take a pitcher and two glasses and set the beer circulating among the players. Those who were not numbered among the quoiters had to visit the bar when they got thirsty.

After the game was finished the whole party went up to the hotel and celebrated until ten o'clock or so with drinking, songs, and stories, and the swapping of opinions.

A favorite evening pastime of the ploughboys was the "going through a 'orse collar." The boy who attempted this, put first a foot through, then his head, and afterward tried to wriggle his whole body through. The smaller the collar, the greater the glory. Once wedged in, the boy was in very awkward shape, and if he chanced to lose his balance, he tumbled about very queerly and helplessly.

Ploughboy Dick would go through any kind of a collar, or try to, for "tuppence." He would look at a collar critically and say, "I'm too big a man for he," but if the tuppence was in sight, he would sweat and strain at it a long time before he would give in.

In the summer, recreation is frequently found by the villagers in attendance on a fête given by some local club. A village must be small indeed that does not have at least one "club day."

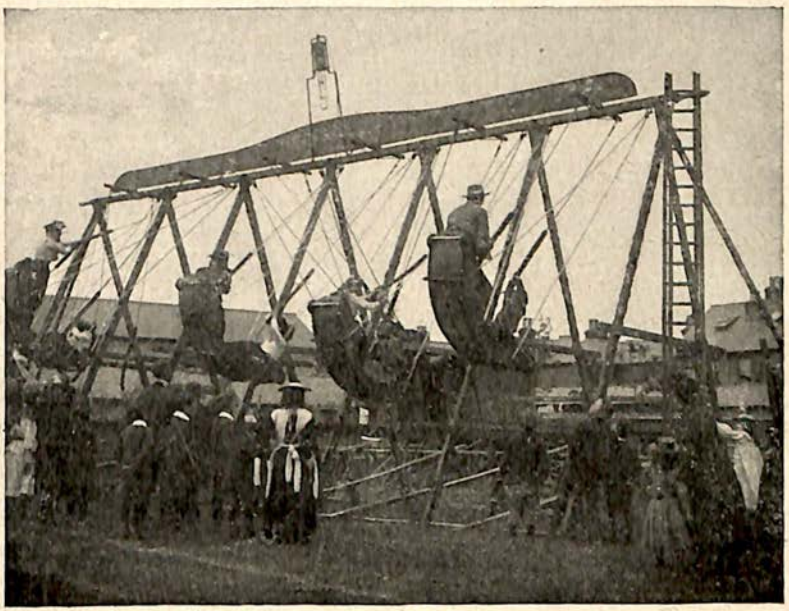
An opportunity came after a time to see one of these fêtes. It was held under the auspices of the Foresters' Club, in a little meadow on the borders of the village. I had been told that the admittance fee was sixpence, but the committee of Foresters at the gate charged me a shilling. This is a way they have

in England — gentry and strangers, when they are recognized as such, are charged double the regular rates. On the other hand, there is sometimes a special half-price rate for laborers.

Within the enclosing hedgerows of the field that I found myself in after the Foresters secured my shilling was a strange little town — a movable Vanity Fair — to amuse the crowd and tempt all the small coins out of the crowd's pockets. The managers of the affair were marching around with their green Forester sashes over their shoulders, trying hard to imagine that they were in the midst of a great occasion and that they were having a grand good time. Numbers of children were drifting about intent on getting all the free fun they could in looking on at such excitements as the place afforded, and in visiting the various booths and making calculations as to how to make their "ha'-pence" go farthest. Besides these, there were various lads and men, a sprinkling of women, and a gayly dressed band that was tooting away on a stand in the midst of the field. Some women and children looked over a rear fence at the fun, and a policeman stood near and visited with them and saw that none of them climbed over. All about the borders of the field were the shooting-galleries, cheap-Jacks' booths, lunch and sweets stands, swings and the steam round-about, and the wagons of the gypsies who owned all

this varied apparatus. It seemed to me the show was rusty, tawdry, and offensive, and I did not care to linger long.

It is on fête days and other holidays that one sees lovers out in force. In the homes of the laborers and in those of many of the tradespeople there is no spare room in which sweethearts can spend their evenings together, and few young men can afford to hire a team,



The Swings at a Fête

so that most of the courting is done in evening walks, or in strolls on holidays and Sunday afternoons. Fairs

are red-letter days to lovers. The young men and the young women are sure to be on hand, and the former make it a point to advance their interests and show their affection by buying the girls "fairings."

Among the minor English pleasures I think an auction, or "sale," as it is called, is worthy of special mention. In the smaller villages, at least, it takes high rank among the excitements within easy reach. When the chance came one day to attend a typical farm sale, I did not fail to be on hand. It was held in a green field next the farmhouse that was being displenished. The carts, machines, furniture, etc., were arranged in a long line near the hedge. Among the other things were two coops of fowls and a hurdled pen of black pigs which were industriously engaged in rooting up the fresh turf. The horses, while awaiting their turn, were led or ridden about the field.

A big crowd was present, of farmers, loafers, and village women with various small children tagging after them. I thought only a few were there to buy. Mostly they came to see the sights, to be entertained, and to have something to talk about. The people gathered thickest about the auctioneer, and always the crowd had a frayed edge of laborers' wives with babies in their arms. The women seemed to find the pigpen rather attractive; and a little group of them hung

about some bundles of bedding as if they had hopes it might be knocked down to them at a bargain when the time came.

The auctioneer did the selling in a rapid, business-like way, and wasted no breath in jokes or in work-

Going Home from the Sale

ing up enthusiasm. This seriousness I was told was because farming was in a bad way, prices had to be low, and the matter wouldn't bear levity.

After the sale the roads were enlivened in every direction with the people on foot and in carts, taking

home their purchases. The centre of one group that interested me was an old woman with a bed-tick rolled up on a wheelbarrow which she trundled along to her cottage, with all her women friends following her. Those who had not bought were just as cheerful as any of the others; for they had seen and heard a vast deal, and were as full of chat as they could hold.

VIII

A SPRINGTIME WALK

ON an afternoon in the middle of May, business called me from the village where I was stopping, to a town about four miles distant. The day was pleasant, and I made the journey on foot, with a small village boy for company. The boy had the red cheeks common among the English children. His clothing, including his cap, was of brown corduroy, and he wore heavy-soled, stubby shoes, the bottoms of which were studded with broad-topped nails. He was bound to make his mark in the world with those shoes; indeed, he made a good many marks every time he put a foot down. On his left arm he wore a band of crape. This indicated that he had recently lost a relative.

He was a shy, good-mannered little fellow. At first acquaintance he would hardly say "yes" and "no" in answer to questions, but this extreme shyness did not last. He was very good to give information about the things that attracted my attention,

and it is of the flowers and birds we saw on our walk, and of the boy's comments on them that I now write.

The way led mostly along a narrow, winding road, hemmed in by hedges, through a farming region of wide fields, with once in a while a patch of woodland. The hedges that were low and well trimmed were dense and green, for such will not blossom except for now and then a lone cluster; but the hedges that were uncared for and grew tall and loose were full of the white hawthorn blossoms. The hawthorn is in flower all the month of May, and is often called "may" in consequence. If a hawthorn bush is allowed to grow in an open field, as frequently happens, it comes in time to be a large tree, very like an apple tree, only more gnarled and much thicker in its branches.

English roadsides in the warmer months are almost everywhere luscious with stout-growing grasses, flowers, and weeds. There is always a sparkle of color in the green, and you never need go far to gather a wild bouquet of considerable variety. Dandelions were numerous to-day, and besides their yellow blossoms there were tall stalks white with winged seeds. Some of the green roadside ditches which I looked down into, where a little stagnant water lay in the bottom, were twinkled all over with tiny blue forget-me-nots.

Daisies, the low, delicate British variety, with tints

Spring in a Village Field

of pink on the under side of their white petals, were everywhere, and a little flower called birdseye, something like the forget-me-not, but several times larger, was common.

The grasses in forward spots had already begun to tassel into blossoms, and the farmers would begin haying in two weeks more. We passed a clump of willows and found that the pussies were getting coarse and seedy, and the fuzz was blowing away. The purple vetch was beginning to blossom in the grass tangles of the roadside.

Some of the wheatfields, or, as the English say, "cornfields," were yellow with charlock blossoms. The boy said of the charlock, "It's one o' the worst weeds there is. It grows in the corn and smothers it. They has to hoe it out."

He showed me a pretty white flower which he said was "cuckoo's eyes," though "they calls 'em coachmen's buttonholes, too," and he pointed out some bright red flowers on a coarser, taller stalk that he called robin's eyes. These are spoken of also as Robin Hoods.

Two varieties of nettles grew along the hedges. There was a great deal of the rank, prickly sort, which they call stinging nettles, and a gentler kind with attractive hooded blossoms that were sometimes yellow, sometimes white. These blossoming nettles did not

have any poisonous prickles on them and were called blind nettles.

"People says stinging nettles don't sting this month," remarked my boy.

"Well, but they do, don't they?" was my response.

"Yes, but they say, 'You try — they won't sting this month,' and you try and get stung, and then they say, 'Well, they won't sting *this month*, but they will sting *you*.'"

"Blind nettles," the boy continued, "they say you must shut your eyes when you pick. If you don't, you'll get your arm broke."

On the nettles we found several snails, and my companion picked up one of them and remarked, "The boys says verses to snails."

"What verses?" I asked.

"Oh, like, —

Snaily bailey, poke out your 'orn,
Or else the butcher will kill you.

Then if the snail won't, the boys kill un. Another they says is, —

Snail, snail, put out your 'orn.
Father and mother are dead.
Your little children outside the back door
Are cryin' for barley bread."

We heard a bird in the hedge, and the boy tried to get a sight of it as it hopped and flitted through the tangle of twigs. "I think that's a tompeter," he said. "He's a hartful bird. You can't catch 'em and you can't hit 'em. You c'n throw right straight at 'em, and they ain't there."

Once the boy pointed out a bird he said was a thrush or stormcock. "They calls it that," he explained, "because they says when the stormcock sings there be wet weather comin'."

We saw a robin flying across a field, and the boy said he had always heard that—

> Robins and wrens
> Be God's friends,

and he affirmed that the boys never rob the nests of these birds. The belief is that a boy who steals a robin's or a wren's egg will shortly get an arm or a leg broken.

English boys like to follow along the hedges and hunt for bird's-nests. In the spring they are fond of eating such eggs as they can discover. But if a boy happens on four eggs in a nest, he has a fear that the bird has finished laying and begun sitting. He therefore blows out a yolk in the palm of his hand to see whether it is suitable for eating or not. When he finds no more than one or two eggs, he sucks them

without any preliminary experiments. A boy who does not fancy raw eggs will take them home to have them boiled.

This stealing of eggs seems ruthless and unfeeling, but I noticed that when the children found young

Planting

birds in a nest they always showed considerable tenderness. "Don't hurt un," they would say to one another.

Our footsteps as the village boy and I tramped along this May day sometimes disturbed a pair of partridges feeding just over the hedge, and sent them

whirring away across the fields. We heard pheasants give their startling double crow of warning in the woods and a cuckoo's mellow calling far away.

"That's a landrail you hear whistlin' now," said the boy. "But you can't tell where he is. He keeps changin' around, and when you hears him in one place he's somewhere else."

We saw a whitethroat and later another bird in an oak, of which the boy said, "I think that's a yellow-hammer, but you can't always tell them from a white-throat unless you sees 'em."

"There's a dishwasher," said the boy, pointing out a black and white bird ahead of us in the roadway. "You watch him when he flies and then you'll see why they calls him that."

The bird took wing in a dipping flight along the ground, and the boy was sure that showed the reason of its name, but I thought the name came from an odd way it had of bobbing up and down after it alighted.

There were butterflies fluttering about, and sometimes we came on a burly bumblebee buzzing among the flowers. Some of the latter were black and white, some black and yellow. The boy called them dumble-doors. Once we saw a peewit, also called the lapwing or plover. However, peewit is its name among the country folk and "peewit!" is what the bird says when

it sings. Peewits are large, round-winged, clumsy-looking birds and have a flopping, uncertain flight. "They always keeps playin' and hollerin'," said my boy. "They builds their nests in the long corn and 'ay."

When we passed a group of farm buildings we saw sparrows busy about the roofs and swallows flitting along the hedges.

"There's one o' those swallows builds at our house," said the boy. "He makes a nest every year under our bedroom window and breeds young ones there. You c'n put your hand out and touch the nest."

In the fields we sometimes observed a flock of blackbirds flying here and there in their uneasy feeding, and in the groves we heard the pigeons cooing. "I had two pigeons," the boy remarked, "but one of 'em's gone away. I don't know but what he might 'a' got shot. That's the best one that's gone away, too — the one what lays the eggs."

When we saw some rooks hovering about a field I asked the boy about rook pie. He seemed not to know much about that particular dish, but he said, "Some likes sparrow pie and some likes hedgehog pie and some likes squirrels pie. I likes apple pie."

We saw and heard many skylarks making their ascents and descents through the air and throwing down their songs to us. "I do like to hear them,"

said the boy. "I read a story about a skylark in a book. I got the book in the Band of 'Ope. 'Twas a haypenny. Sometimes when they sings they goes way up out of sight, sir."

The sun was now almost at the setting point, and the town we journeyed to was just ahead.

IX

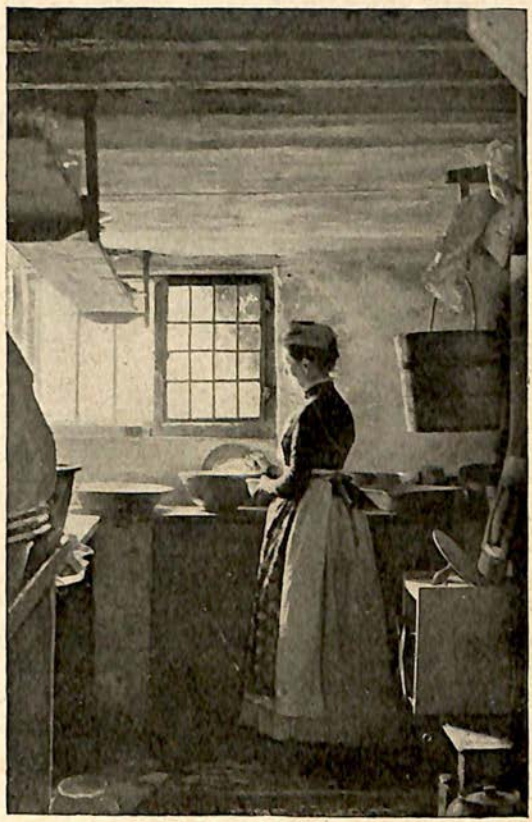
AN ACQUAINTANCE ON THE ROAD

AN hour later I was through with my business in the town, and the boy and I trudged along in company on our way home. But we had not gone far when along came an old gentleman in a cart drawn by a little white horse, and he asked us to ride.

We accepted the invitation, though when we were in, our added weight threw the cart backward on its two wheels out of balance, and it sometimes looked when we were going up hill as if we would lift the little horse off its feet. The evening was well advanced and a half-moon was shining dimly through the filmy clouds. It was just the evening to make one dozy and meditative. Whether it was that or something else, certain it was that our driver's mood was very leisurely, and he let the little white horse walk nearly the whole distance.

The man was a farmer, Copley by name, and when I asked him if it was true, as most said, that farming

in England was no longer profitable, he replied that in his own case he made it pay. He thought, too, that all the old-fashioned farmers who were prudent and supervised things closely themselves and did not try to be modern and stylish made money. As for himself, he went out and worked in the fields with his men, but most farmers, nowadays, did not touch the work themselves, but rode around on horseback and oversaw. Then their daughters wanted to be ladies and would not touch a dish to wash it or do



Work in the Pantry

any other real work. "No," he added regretfully, "you never see a farmer's daughter now going out to milk with her skirts tucked up and a three-legged stool under her arm."

Mr. Copley believed that one reason for his success in farming where others failed lay in the fact that he did not visit the publics. Still, he found it necessary on the long summer days to have his home-brewed beer regularly. He found it strengthening.

But the subject that lay nearest Farmer Copley's heart was religion, and it was on that topic he dwelt most as we drove along through the moonlit mystery of the night. Next Sunday he was to preach at his chapel. I asked him if he wrote out what he was to say beforehand.

"No," said he, "and I don't even think about it." He considered it wrong to write out anything. The Lord had promised in Scripture to put words in your mouth, and to write a sermon was as much as to say that your thoughts were better than the Lord's were. He often did not know two minutes before he began what he was going to talk about. Once he had in mind a certain passage of Scripture for a text and when he got up he couldn't think of it. Instead, there came to his mind the words, "Not all that say unto me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter into the kingdom of heaven," and he spoke from that. The idea of his

discourse as he expounded this text was that a prayer, to be heard, must come from the heart. "Lots o' prayers never get any higher'n the ceiling of the room they was spoke in. One woman that was to the meetin' that Sunday come and talked to me afterwards. What I'd spoke had displeased the old gal. She said she wa'n't comin' to hear me no more — I condemned people too much."

Mr. Copley thought that the woman that kept the upper public house in Sedleigh was "under conviction," but did not declare herself for Christ because she was not willing to give up her business.

He remembered the time and place and all the circumstances of his own conversion. "I could pick out the spot where the change come over me and the Lord spoke to me and said, 'I am the way and the life' as easy as I can p'int out to you that little black spot side o' the road on ahead there."

He was a nice sort of primitive farmer, and I enjoyed the ride very well and was a little sorry when we reached the hotel where the boy and I got out while Mr. Copley drove on into the darkness.

At parting, Mr. Copley had urged me to visit him at Griston Farm. He said he would tell "the Missus" to invite me in, provided he was in the fields when I called, and I was to stay and have tea with them. The farmer's invitation was not forgotten,

and a week later I started out to walk to Griston Farm, two miles distant beyond Noll's Hill. The

A Farmhouse

day, early, had been dim and chilly with a fog, but the fog had melted away, and the afternoon was bright and warm. The grass in the meadows was getting long and wavy, the clover was in blossom, a gentle wind blew, and nature was full of dreamy summer charm. I followed a crooked lane that led upward to the wooded crown of Noll's Hill, and then continued on down into a beautiful tree-dotted valley. Here was Griston Farmhouse. It was a good deal of

a mansion — wide and high, and many-chimneyed — standing well back from the road on a grassy terrace.

At one end of the house was the farmyard gate, with a big dog on either side in front of his kennel. The dogs barked at me and tugged savagely at their chains, and offered to eat me up if I would step within reach. They reminded me of the chained lions in "Pilgrim's Progress." I went inside the yard and followed a path to a rear door. By the pathside was another kennel and another chained dog, whose mouth was watering for a bite of me, and I found a fourth dog on guard at the back entrance, who cast longing looks in my direction. I began to wish I had not come.

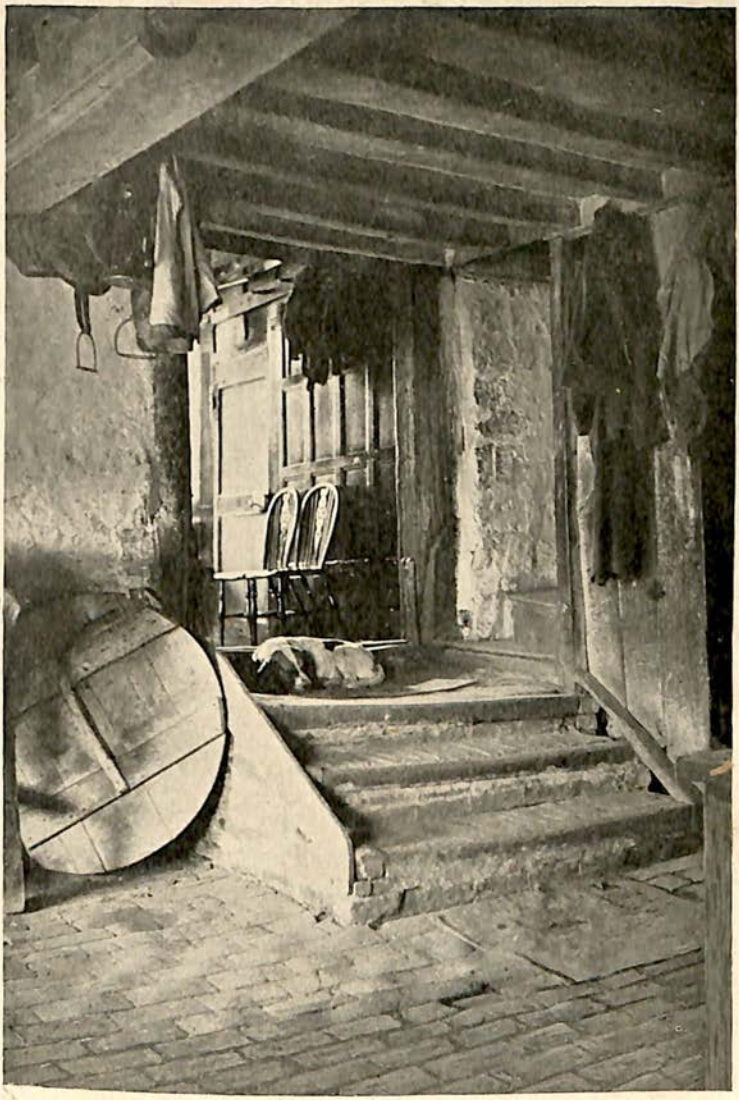
A rap at the door brought Mr. Copley himself, who took me to the kitchen — and such a place I was never in before! It was a big room and fairly high. A delightful window, wide and many-paned looked toward the road, and a smaller window, high up, broke the wall opposite. At the back of the room was a great dresser with its generous array of colored crockery and silverware.

But the thing I saw first and was most amazed by was the fireplace. Half that side of the room was lost in its black cavern. The fire, with its great andirons, and hooks, and pots, occupied only the central part of the fireplace, and left room at each side for a

chimney-corner seat right under the gloomy flue that opened above.

Within the flue, on a level with the second story, a little chamber opened out to one side that had to be climbed to from the fireplace. The farmer lit a splinter of wood and held it high over his head and by its light I saw a dim recess in which were hung many full-length sides of bacon curing. Just below the kitchen ceiling was suspended a heavy wooden bacon rack, on which the pork would be laid after the curing was done, to await the time when it would be needed for use.

I sat down to tea with the family at the kitchen table, and afterward had a farther look about the place. Most of the rooms had been modernized, but, besides the kitchen, there was a latticed-windowed pantry, and a back room that were as ancient as one could wish. This last adjoined the kitchen, with which it was connected by a heavy oak door. The back room was on a lower level than the rest of the house, and I descended to its flagstone flooring by a flight of broad steps. Then I had before me another cavernous fireplace, hung about with shining pots and pans; and a mediæval hired girl, who looked as if she had not combed her hair of late years, was sweeping up the hearth. The room was high and big, the beams were fully exposed in the ceiling, and numbers of great fire-blackened kettles and worm-eaten benches were scat-



A Corner in a Farmhouse Interior

tered about. The apartment in every way savored delightfully of antiquity, and its doubtful odor made its connection with the remote past still more emphatic.

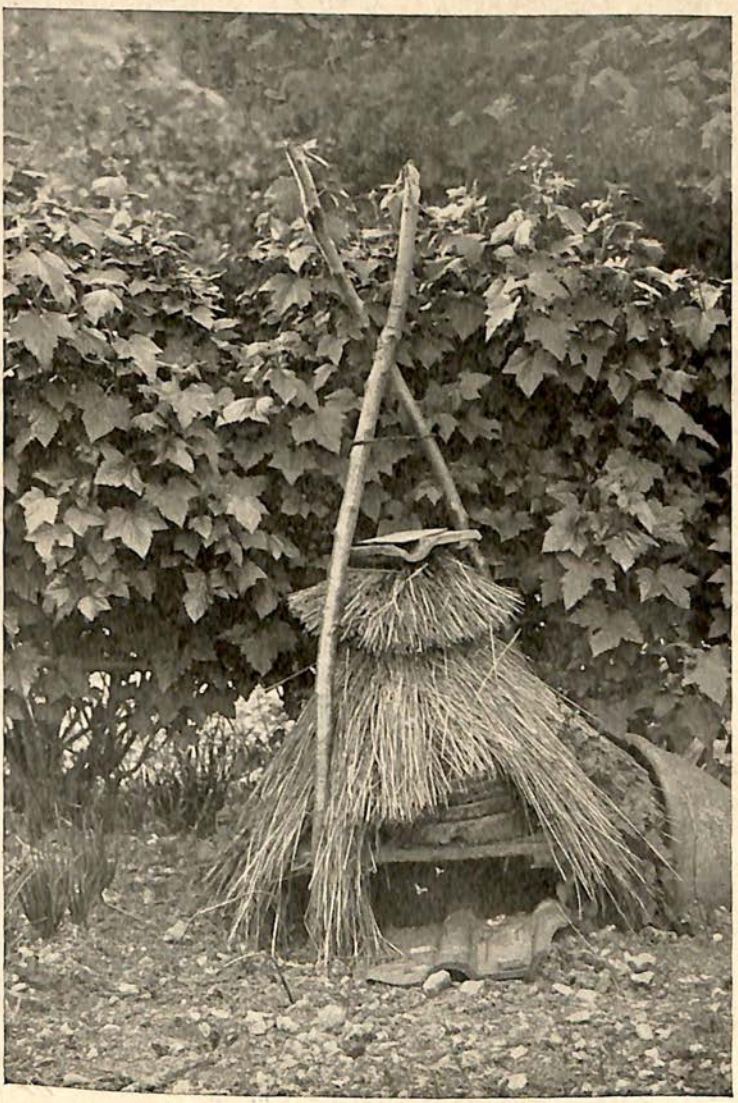
As a whole the farmhouse was a queer tangle of many rooms on different levels and of varying heights. In some of them you needed to be short of stature or you would bump your head, while others were as high and airy as anyone could desire. I not only saw all there was of the house above ground, but descended into the cellar. It was a low, little cavern only ten or fifteen feet square, where were stored potatoes and other vegetables. A cupboard stood on one side with some jars of preserves on the shelves, and on the cellar floor was a great earthen basin that had as much as a half-bushel of eggs preserved in it in lime water waiting for prices to go up.

Farmhouses nearly all have cellars, though not very capacious ones. Cottages have no cellars whatever. There is not the same need for them that we have, for in England they do not have our extremes of heat and cold. Yet cellars are desirable, and the main reason why they do without them is the expense. They would have to dig a hole, put in masonry, and build a wooden floor instead of the brick or stone one that is usual in the lower story. A little back shed has to take the place of a cellar in the cottager's home.

When I prepared to return to Sedleigh Mr. Copley

came outside with me and we made a tour of the farmhouse surroundings. Close at one side of the house was a little enclosure which Mr. Copley spoke of as "the orchard," where were a dozen apple trees crowded with blossoms. Adjoining this was the trim garden with narrow paths of turf threading it here and there, and at "the bottom" of the garden by the wall were a number of queer, straw-covered beehives. Nearly all the farmers and tradespeople keep bees, and their housing both in itself and in its surroundings is usually very interesting. Modern hives are the exception. The low domes of straw or rushes woven by the gypsies are the rule, and these are apt to be protected from wind and weather by an overlaying of broken earthen pots, old blankets, and other rubbish, or by a thatch of straw. The habitations thus elaborated are very picturesque, and as the bees seem satisfied, I suppose they are all right.

In the largest thatched shed back of the Griston Farmhouse was the well. The apparatus for drawing the water was most remarkable. At the side of the well was an enormous wooden wheel fully twelve feet high, and its inner rim was a path that the drawer-of-water walked to make the wheel revolve and haul up the bucket. As the wheel turned the rope wound up on the heavy beam which was the wheel's axis. The well was a hundred feet deep. To raise the



A Beehive

bucket to the surface made for Mr. Copley a five minutes' walk, while his wife, who was lame and slow, had to spend fully fifteen minutes. The distance walked was probably close to one-third of a mile, and the only relieving feature of the situation was that the wooden bucket was big enough to bring up rather more than half a barrel of water at each drawing.

X

THE HOME OF THE PILGRIMS

MY first sight of London was after a long sojourn in the beautiful English country, and the change to city grime and turmoil was far from agreeable. It was noon when I got off the cars at Waterloo Station. I crossed the Thames and wandered about through the great business thoroughfares. The day was dull and misty and there were occasional black gatherings of clouds that threatened thunderstorms. London was even dimmer than usual with smoke and haze. You could smell the burning coal, and the sky looked murky and hot. I had laid my plans to spend several days in the city, but the big town, as I saw it, seemed so dingy and commonplace, and there was so much of crowds and of noise, that I changed my mind and toward evening took a train that carried me northward.

As soon as the roar and confusion of the city were left behind, the delightfulness of the country reasserted itself. The views from the car window were charm-

ing. It was late in April, and the fields were green and luscious, the new leaves were pricking out of their buds, the little gardens had a slick, freshly planted look, and here and there in them were vegetables already well started.

All the way we went through a low, rolling country, every foot of it under careful cultivation. We passed farms, and villages, and mansions lying far off across the fields, and at times had a chance to look down on a little town that huddled its red-tiled roofs in some hollow and wreathed the air above with hundreds of blue and vapory smoke columns rising from the chimney pots with which such places fairly bristle. But the newest sight to me was an occasional windmill standing ghostly in the twilight of the hazy distance. By and by it became too dark to see things outside and it grew more chilly, and the car windows misted over.

My destination was Bawtry, in northern Nottinghamshire, which I reached in the late evening. The attraction that brought me thither was the fact that the immediate neighborhood had been the home of the first Pilgrim settlers of New England.

Bawtry by daylight proved to be a good-sized village with a wide chief street lined by ancient shops and dwellings. At each end of the broad barren of this main thoroughfare was a pump, and near the upper

one a battered and armless market-cross still stands, though the market that once used to enliven Bawtry street has not been held for over half a century.

In the pleasant farming lands round about I found the soil very different from that in the southern country I had recently left. There, the plough turned up

Bawtry Market-cross

the earth in rough humps that dried into a tough and rocky-looking hardness. Here it was light and mellow, and instead of four horses they ploughed

with two and dispensed with a ploughboy. More than that, the ploughman only used one line to guide his team. This was a rope which was attached to the check-rein of the nigh horse. When the ploughman wanted his team to gee, he gave the rope a jerk. When he wanted it to haw, he gave the rope a steady pull. I wondered if William Brewster or Governor Bradford ever followed the plough after that fashion when they lived in the region three hundred years ago.

Bawtry itself was the home of neither of these old-time dissenters. Brewster lived at Scrooby, Bradford at Austerfield, small villages that lie in opposite directions with Bawtry, half way between, within easy walking distance.

When you approach Scrooby, you dip into meadow lowlands. There, along the diked banks of the little river Ryton, on the morning of my visit cattle and long-haired sheep were grazing and several swans were sailing on the current or preening their feathers at the water's edge. I saw one of the swans in flight, and it had such a great reach of strong white wings it made a magnificent sight. But the birds appear ugly and awkward enough on shore, dabbling in the marshy hollows after food.

From the distance, Scrooby village with its red roofs half hidden in the spring greens of its shrubbery and

its little spire shooting up in the midst was very pretty. But in its near reality it is a shapeless, forlorn little place whose days of former prosperity are a long way removed. Before the time of railroads the village was on the main stage route north from London and it was busy and prosperous. Now that it has the railroad, everybody flies past it, and its own people drift away to larger places.

A cluster of a dozen or more houses makes up the village. They are built close together on several intertwining lanes. Nearly all the houses seem very old, and most show signs of neglect, and some are crumbling into ruins. The village has two or three inns, — a village however poor and decayed has to have its drinking-places, — and it has an ancient gristmill built over the little river.

At the church gate I met a gray old gentleman with a key in his hand, and he showed me the church interior. Then he took me down a village alley and directed me to follow a path through a gate to the site of the old manor-house where Brewster lived long ago.

I crossed a pasture field where a herd of cattle were feeding and approached a group of farm-buildings. I knocked at the back door of the house, and it was opened by a bent old man. He showed considerable interest when he found I was from America, and got two of the women folks to bring out some photographs

Gables and Chimneys

for me to see. After that he took me into the parlor, and had me write my name in a thin blank-book he kept for a visitors' register. Then he said he would take me outdoors and called to his wife, "I want me hat." But his wife was busy, and the man poked aside a tow-headed baby that was toddling about underfoot and got the hat himself.

My guide took me down a garden path that led from the house to some long brick stables. He said that when Brewster "turned good," he and his companions held meetings in one of the apartments of these old cowsheds. He even knew in which particular section the Puritans had worshipped. To visit this building we had to enter a mucky barn-yard, and so disturbed the meditations of a very corpulent and pug-nosed pig which with a younger relation followed and sniffed us with suspicious interest, as we kept along the cobbles at the borders of the yard.

The interior of the long building is divided into as many as half a dozen apartments by brick partitions. The one used by Brewster and his company is as large as a moderate sized room. In itself it is quite bare and uninteresting — simply a dim, windowless, straw-littered stable. Formerly it had a door on each side, so that if the worshippers were interrupted by their persecutors they might fly by the door that seemed most expedient, according to the position of the un-

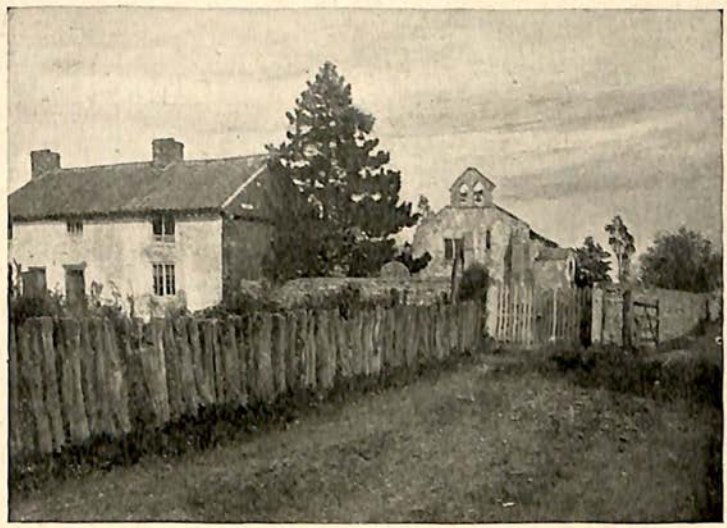
friendly ones outside. At least, such was the story told by my guide.

In the pasture field stands a crab tree so old that it is thought Brewster must often have eaten of its fruit. The top and one side have fallen away, and there is only a shell-like and gnarled old stub left. In spite of its age and decay it has life still, and the bushy sprouts that crowded it were full of pink buds that soon would be blossoms.

The old man of the manor told me he sold the stocks that were once used in the village for the punishment of offenders for £5. They were not in reality worth a shilling, he said, but the man wanted them to send to America, and as he himself had no use for them he let them go. He had no doubt he could sell the old crab tree to go to America, if he cared to.

At Austerfield still stands the cottage of William Bradford, in the cellar of which, according to tradition, the Pilgrims at times had religious worship. Austerfield is a mile from Bawtry by the field paths in the opposite direction from Scrooby. It is an uncommonly dismal village. Its brick houses and barns crowd close together along its single street for a half-mile or more. Their walls are for the most part snug with the cobble walks, and their barrenness is not relieved by either flowers or vines. Worse than this, the buildings seem to present their backs or sides to

the street, and these are often windowless or nearly so. The prospect looking along these grim old walls of



Austerfield Church

brick and plaster, unshadowed by a single tree, is as depressing as a vista of greasy tenements in an American factory village.

In the centre of the hamlet, at the end of a short lane, next a barn-yard, is a dilapidated little church. It is weather-worn and splintered by storm and frost, and it not only dates back to the days of the Pilgrims, but hundreds of years beyond. One need only look at its enormously thick walls and its quaint Nor-

man arches with their rude chisellings, to feel assured of the building's great age.

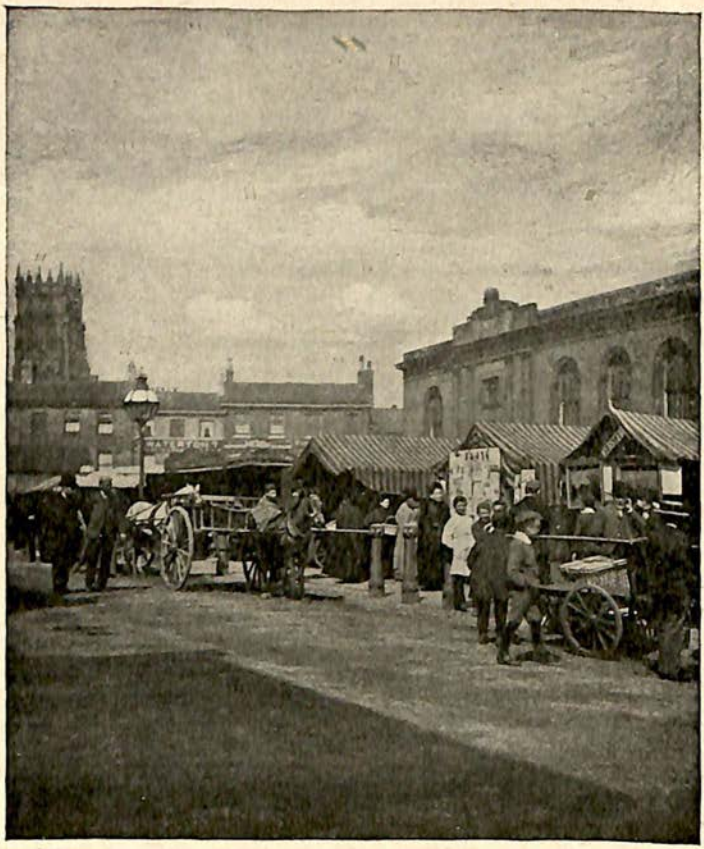
But though an air of decay now lingers over the church and the village houses, all the region was prosperous in the days of the Pilgrims; and the lonely little band of voyagers to our bleak New England shores must have felt painfully the contrast between their new home and the pleasant well-cultivated fertility of the home they left behind.

XI

A MARKET DAY

TUESDAYS and Saturdays were market days for all the people about Bawtry. Everybody who had anything to sell, or who wanted to buy anything, went on those days to Doncaster, a large town, eight miles north. One Saturday I went, too. Nearly every one on the train I took carried a basket, and when we reached the town I had simply to follow the basket-laden crowd, and that brought me to the market-place.

I never was in more of a hurly-burly. The centre of the scene was a low, wide-spreading building of dingy gray stone. On the west side of this building was a broad open space full of canopied booths, tables, and covered carts arranged in little streets. It was like a small city of shops. There were fish booths, meat booths, sweetshops, and restaurants, and many displays of crockery, dry-goods, and hardware. You could even buy a gay-colored chromo in a gilt frame. Everywhere were people crowding the toy-like streets, buying and



Doncaster Market-place

bargaining and stowing away bundles in their various-shaped baskets.

In a lane south of the building were vegetables, fruits, and greens in bags, crates and heaps piled along the

pavement for disposal at wholesale. In an open space at the end of this lane were the vans and wagons of the farm folk, mostly empty and without horses, pushed to one side out of the way. Here a gateway in an iron fence admitted one to the cattle and sheep markets. The sheep pens covered an acre or two, and as much more space was reserved for the cattle. Chipped bark from the tannery vats was strewn underfoot, which, mixed with the natural odors of the place, made its aroma anything but choice.

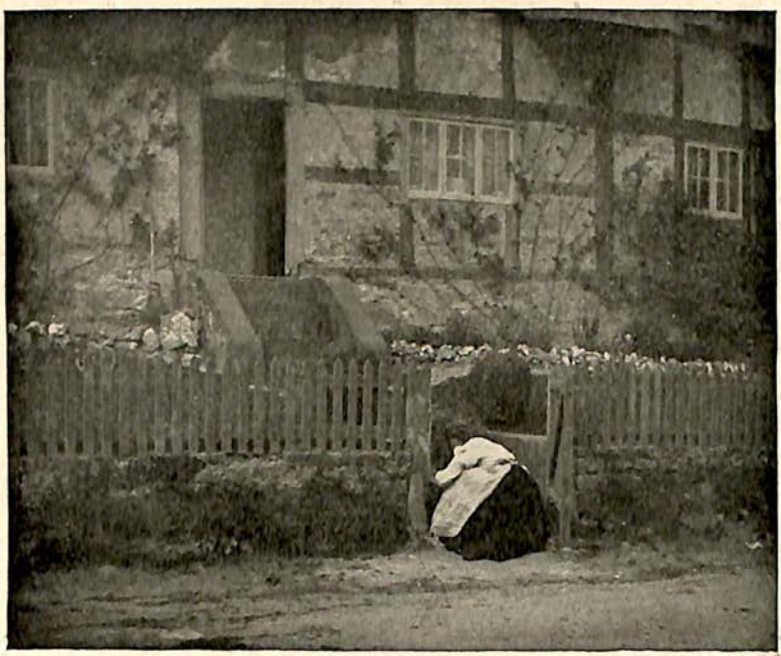
Under the edge of a great shed were displays of farm tools and machinery, and in neighboring vans and booths you could buy harnesses, rope, brooms, and other heavy articles.

Inside the market building, at one end, was a large room known as the corn exchange. Here were many tables strewn with samples of grain and fertilizers, and a crowd of brokers and buyers busy with their bargaining.

But most of the building was given up to the retail marketers. The part occupied by them was a great, open, high-pillared hall, its floor full of benches with alleys between for the public. In one section were fruits and vegetables and many flowers, both potted and in bouquets; in another section were a score or two of farmers' wives standing guard over numerous baskets of eggs, butter, cheese, and dressed

fowls with their ghastly heads still on their bodies. In another part of the hall were dozens of crates and baskets of live fowls and several cages of timid rabbits, while along the walls were the booths of the butchers — "shambles," they called them.

When I returned to Bawtry late in the day, I



Scrubbing

found a travelling caravan camped at the "bottom" of the street (the English always say "top and bot-

tom" instead of head and foot). The horses were tethered near by, and steps had been put up between the shafts to the front doors of the two vans. Above the roof of the larger car a length of stovepipe showed, from which a wisp of smoke was fluttering. From the doorway of the car an intelligent and pleasant-appearing young woman was looking out. At a little remove, near the village pump, was a kettle hung over a fire, and some lines of newly washed garments were drying close by.

But the chief feature of the scene was a row of half a dozen little donkeys all saddled and ready for riders. I never saw anything so sober and sleepy. On their bridles were their names, and under each name was printed a motto something like this, "Oh, what fun," or "I am so good." The donkeys were all the time surrounded by a group of village children, rubbing and poking them and reading their mottoes. A good many of these children apparently had no money and were simply bent on getting all the enjoyment that was to be had free. Yet every now and then two or three boys would pay their pennies and each mount a donkey and start down the street. Each boy had a switch, and one of the gypsy men ran after for a ways and belabored the donkeys from behind to get them well awake and attentive to business. As for the boys, they lashed their animals the

journey through, and when they returned the creatures were apt to get some extra raps and kicks before they were adjusted to their places and fell asleep again.

A little to one side of the donkey row was a curious sort of a vehicle, high above whose four wheels was hoisted a kind of a boat. Against the boat a ladder leaned to ascend and descend by. On the ground by the ladder was a young fellow shaking a handful of coins between the palms of his hands and calling out to the children to come on, only a ha'penny to ride to the top of the street and back. The children who paid their ha'pennies were privileged to climb the ladder and get into the boat. There they amused themselves while they waited by jostling each other and spitting down on those outside or throwing pebbles at them.

When the boat had a dozen or fifteen in it, the jockey fellow pulled down the ladder, mounted the driver's seat, and started his horse up the village. The boat began at once to sway backward and forward, and the children felt as if they were pitching along on a sea voyage. They liked it so well they sang all the way to the further end of the street and back at the top of their voices.

In a bit of ragged grass-plot next the caravan's camping place was a muddy puddle, and some of the boys who had no money or had spent it gathered there. One little fat boy with a broad white collar on stood

in the puddle and kicked the water on his mates when they came near. He got more on himself than he did on them, and I expected to see him go flat in some of his efforts. But luck was with him and he persevered

Playing Hopscotch in the Street

until a larger boy, who had been watching his opportunity, grabbed him, dragged him out, tumbled him in the dirt, and gave him a licking.

On the other side of the caravan, in the street, a crowd of boys were busy kicking a small ball about

the open. There seemed to be no game — they each kicked the ball whenever they had a chance and did not at all mind what direction it took. This aimless game of ball-kicking I saw in many parts of England, and sometimes it was played by boys who were almost men grown.

XII

A NIGHT AT A LINCOLNSHIRE INN

FROM Bawtry I went to Lincoln. It happened to be a great fair week in the city. There was the horse fair and the cattle fair and the pleasure fair, and the place was full of noise and turmoil. The horses and the cattle I neglected in order to give all my energies to the pleasure fair, which I found in an enclosed square near the city centre. The near streets were jammed with just such a throng and tumult as we see in our American towns on a circus day. No admission was charged at the gates. You walked right in. First you passed rows of booths devoted to the sale of sweets, eatables, toys, and fancy articles, with now and then a little photograph gallery sandwiched in among the rest. Beyond were several squares fenced about by netting, where for a small sum you were privileged to throw three wooden balls at a row of cocoanuts. The nuts had faces roughly marked on them and were set on stakes at the farther sides of the enclosures. If you dislodged a cocoanut, it was your property.

But the great feature of the fair was the roundabouts or merry-go-rounds. About a dozen of them were in operation that day in Lincoln pleasure fair, and they were all as gaudy with red and gold as it was possible to make them. They ran by steam power, and the engine inside each roundabout had a steam organ attached, and every organ was piping away at a furious rate on a tune that was distressingly unlike the musical selections of any of its rivals. After you had exhausted the pleasures of being whirled on the little wooden horses of the roundabouts, you could try the steam swings that swayed you back and forth through the air at such a tremendous rate it seemed a wonder you did not get shot out; and when that palled there were still plenty of other sports for your delectation.

Taken all together it was the most giddy, flashy, exciting sort of place imaginable. Yet it had its quieter side, and if there were those whose nerves were not equal to the more noisy and violent amusements, they could seek some of the milder pleasures; such, for instance, as the peepshows.

The peepshow that I visited was not especially edifying. I paid a penny at the door of the tent and went inside. At once the noises without grew dim, and in the hush and the twilight I had the feeling as if I had stepped into some place of religious worship. But

this impression was quickly dispelled when I began to make a tour of the twenty-five bull's-eye glasses into which I was free to gaze. They revealed the worst collection of pictures I have ever looked at all in one lump. Most of them were badly done as well as morally doubtful, and some were horribly bloody. The final one was a donkey looking over a fence. It was labelled "When shall we meet again?"

As I was leaving the fair I noticed just down the street a crowd gathering about a Punch-and-Judy show and I became one of the fast-increasing audience. The nucleus of the crowd was a light, curtain-covered box about six feet square and eight high. On a shelf in the open upper front sat a little dog with gay ribbons around his neck. A young fellow close by was playing on some mouthpipes, and from inside the little play-house came the sound of a drum beating, and an occasional squeaking of a Punch-and-Judy voice.

By and by the music stopped and Mr. Punch bobbed up and began to talk. He made Dog Toby hold up one paw, then the other, then both paws, and whacked a stick at him. Dog Toby seemed astonished, but minded well till presently he was tumbled down out of sight.

I could not tell very well what was said in the play, but it was full of quarrelling and head-hitting. Mrs. Punch comes in and there is a row. Then she

makes Mr. Punch mind the baby. The baby cries and Mr. Punch spanks it and bangs it and at last throws it out of the window.

Mrs. Punch comes in and asks for the baby. Punch says he threw it out of the window. Then there is weeping and wailing and quarrelling, and Judy beats Punch and Punch beats Judy.

In the end Punch kills Judy and then a policeman comes and there is another round of disputing and knocking. Lastly a ghost appears and keeps popping up before Mr. Punch from all quarters. The ghost is a doll with a very white face and very pink cheeks. Mr. Punch can't catch or hit this ghost, and it worries him. The continual reappearance of the ghost makes his mind dwell on his crime and he gets more and more conscience-stricken about killing his wife.

It struck me that if ever a villain deserved punishment for his crimes, Punch did. But he escaped justice and the gallows, and as played at the Lincoln fair he ended his exertions by sitting up on the front shelf of the little street theatre and singing "After the Ball."

The story was rough and coarse, the figures grotesque, the manner of acting exaggerated in the extreme, and yet there was underneath a primeval directness and simplicity that gave it an absorbing interest. Grown people and children both, though

they had seen the play many times, watched it to the end with unflagging attention.

I now left the pleasure fair behind and climbed to the ancient castle and cathedral that crown the hill in the centre of the city. Later I wandered at random through the crooked streets that zigzag up and down the hillside; and all the time I could hear, far off, the faint and confused murmur of the music and noises of the fair.

This undertone of distant merriment was a sound entirely different from anything I had ever known in America, and its unmistakable old-world flavor added distinctly to the pleasure of my ramble through the antiquated Lincoln byways. It is not easy to suggest in words the charm of the grimy mediæval streets to be found in the older parts of every English city. You must see them to feel their fascination.

The ancient sections of the towns are nearly always shapeless tangles of uncertain lanes and narrow streets, and the surprises of this irregularity are a continual delight. One rejoices, too, in the constant discovery of buildings that have all the rudeness and picturesqueness of days hundreds of years gone by. Their weather-worn and time-stained walls and the mossy tiles and sagging lines of their roofs are very beautiful. One never tires of the strange old shops and dwellings, especially those with overhanging upper

stories. These warped, venerable buildings are so charming to look at it seems a pity they are not

A Group of Old Town Houses

oftener in surroundings that would make them pleasant to live in.

After all, the attraction that the English towns have for the sight-seer is not wholly dependent either on age or charm of architecture. In part, at least, it is due to the gentle atmosphere that always bathes them. Even on such a day as the one I

spent in Lincoln, which was the brightest and sunniest we had had for some time, the town atmosphere was infused with a haze that gave every prospect tenderness and sentiment. This was largely owing to the fact that in England they burn soft coal, and on quiet days the air of even the smallest villages will get its tinge of smoky vapor. Its earthy and not unpleasant odor is particularly apparent when fires are briskened for cooking and heat in the chilly mornings and evenings.

Toward the end of the afternoon I left Lincoln city, and walked easterly along a canal out into the fen country. Most of Lincolnshire is fenland, and is only kept from the overflow of the high tides by an elaborate system of diking. The land lies very low, and stretches away monotonously toward the ocean as far as the eye can reach, broken at long intervals by slight ledges and tree clumps. Many teams were at work ploughing in the fens, and many little fires smoked lazily where heaps of stubble were burning. Behind me, the one dominant feature of the landscape, lay Lincoln city, terracing with its roofs the hill where loomed, high over all, the lofty towers and fretted gables of its beautiful cathedral.

A two-mile walk brought me to the quiet, rural village of Washingboro, where I found lodging at a queer little inn called, "The Hunter's Leap." The

most peculiar feature of the inn was that it had no door on the street, though it occupied a street corner; and I almost despaired of getting into it at first. As a last resort, after looking about and studying the matter, I went around to the back into an alley-like, flagged yard, and ventured to rap at a rear door. That brought a maid, and the maid brought her mistress; and though, like most inns, "The Hunter's Leap" was not in the habit of taking lodgers, it was at length agreed to furnish me with a night's shelter.

I stood in the doorway while we parleyed, and we had barely finished when I was surprised by a voice from the room within saying, "Come in, Master."

I obeyed the invitation, and found an old gentleman, with his mug of beer before him, sitting on a great straight-backed settle that reached out from the borders of the fireplace nearly across the room. It was a dusky little apartment, doing service both as kitchen and inn taproom, and with its big settle, its floor laid with square red tiles, and its low ceiling crossed by a heavy beam, it had a flavor of unusual quaintness.

The old gentleman had overheard me say that I was from America, and he gave me a hearty welcome, because he had two sisters over there in the States in Ann Arbor and a nephew in Chicago. When he had explained all this at some length, he began at

the beginning and told it all through again. He was bound that I should get the facts clear in my mind, for every time in my stay at Washingboro that I got within talking range of this old gentleman he compelled me to stop while he said, as if it were fresh and important information, "I 'ave two sisters in Hann Harbor," etc.

The only time he got off the track was once when he stopped between his repetitions to inquire if American people were like English people, and he was particularly anxious to know if American girls were good looking. One other question was as to whether our summer came at the same season of the year it did in England.

To change the subject, I went for a walk. When I returned, about eight o'clock, I found the inn taproom quite populous. Mugs and glasses in process of being emptied crowded the table, tongues were wagging, and the air was heavy with tobacco smoke. I could not run away, and I took a seat near the door. The company at once made room for me in their midst, and urged me to come up in the centre of things by the fire, but I persisted in declining the honor.

One well-to-do farmer, after he had taken his drop, wanted me to go with him to his home near by and see some fat sheep that he was going to drive to Lincoln market on the morrow.

He took me to a big house up the road, and we went into the stone-paved kitchen where some of the family were eating supper by the light of the open fire. The room was festooned with many hams and sides of bacon. Some of the meat was two years old, the farmer said. He lit a candle and put it in a tin lantern with glass sides, and led the way into a big barn-

A Cottage Breakfast

yard fenced all about, as if against assault, by a high stone wall. In this enclosure were straw ricks and numbers of stone sheds and barns. We went into the barn where the sheep were penned. They had been clipped the day before, and their long-haired fleeces lay in a pile on the barn floor, each wound in a bundle, inner side out. The barn space above was open to the rafters. To enable me to see better into the upper gloom, the farmer took the candle from his lantern and held it over his head. We visited the shed where he kept his horses; the cow shed; the chicken shed, where the fowls were roosting on poles well up under the roof; and the piggery, where two fat hogs rose up ghost-like on their fore legs with a funny upheaval of the straw with which they had covered themselves.

Finally the farmer said we would see the calf pen. This was a joke; for when I looked in, there was naught but a big black and white rabbit blinking at us from the floor. The man was quite proud of his farm and of the fact that a person from America had come to see it. When I returned to the inn he went with me to get a final drink, and sitting in the taproom among his cronies, he talked at some length about this "American — a native," who had been to see his fat sheep. He told me I talked English pretty well for an American, and seemed to have the idea that across the water we had a different language.

I spent the night in the queerest sort of room right under the roof. The ceiling slanted upward from the sides and bulged down into the room in the middle. I had to be careful to keep my knees bent, for there was nowhere I could stand straight without bumping my head. The floor was partly covered with a carpet. The sides of the room were papered, but the paper in places was peeling off and was badly stained with leakage.

My light was a candle in a tin candlestick. There were two stands and a bureau in the room, and the bureau was ornamented with a cheap clock that registered two o'clock when it was nine. About midnight the alarm went off with a startling clatter.

Added to all other experiences I made the acquaintance of a large family of fleas. Still, that was nothing remarkable, for fleas are regular boarders at nearly all the English hotels and lodging-houses, though not usually in such numbers as I found here. The creatures are the more exasperating because they are so small and have such a lively hop that you can rarely catch one to take vengeance on it.

XIII

A YORKSHIRE VILLAGE

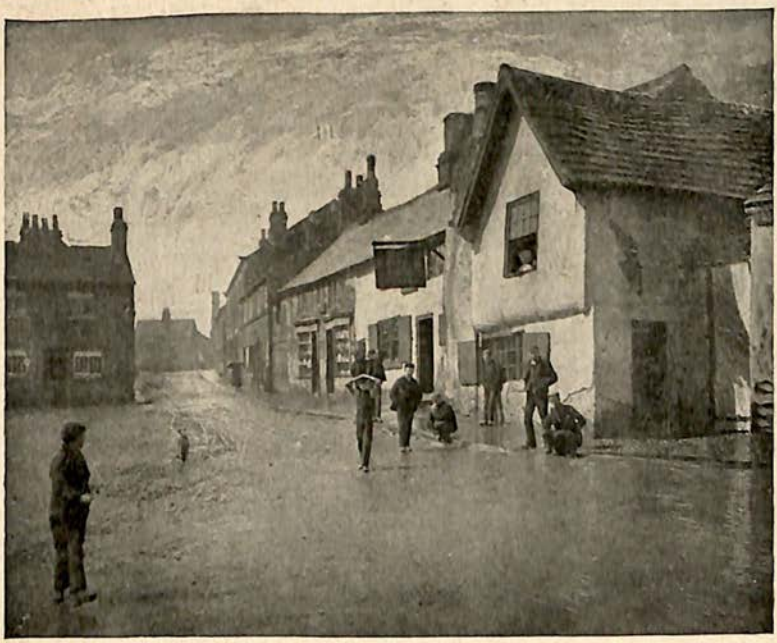
THE next morning I took the train for Sheffield. We had several heavy showers on the way, but it cleared afterward, though great windy clouds continued to blow about the sky all day.

The last part of the journey was through a region of many collieries. Their tall chimneys, mountainous heaps of slag, long lines of little freight cars loaded with coal, and many black crowded little villages were continually coming into view. Everywhere were smoke and vapors. But the place of all others for grime and mirk is Sheffield city. Its atmosphere is kept so loaded with the soot forever belching forth from its great iron works and factories that the place is fairly gloomy even at midday. Smoke overhangs it and smoke drifts through its streets to such an extent as to give the town a look weird and uncanny. In this daytime twilight there seemed something portentous of tempest or calamity, and it was a relief to get away.

I went to Ecclesfield, an obscure little place, five miles distant, that attracted me solely because it was the birthplace and girlhood home of Juliana Horatia Ewing, than whom there has been no more charming writer of tales for children in our language.

For a village of two thousand inhabitants, I found Ecclesfield uncommonly well supplied with publics. There were the "Traveller's Rest," the "Black Bull," the "George and Dragon," the "Griffin," the "White Bear," the "Greyhound," the "Tankard" inn, etc., — eleven in all. The place had no hotel, but among so many inns I thought I could have no trouble in finding a stopping-place; yet I tried them one after the other unsuccessfully. That the "Black Bull" and the "Griffin" should refuse me was no surprise; but when the "Traveller's Rest" went back on its name, I began to be decidedly disconsolate.

Finally I took the suggestion of a maid at the "George and Dragon," and went to see a Mrs. Stringer whose home was on a near side street. Mrs. Stringer was short and fat, wore spectacles, and as she happened to be dressed up when I called, she had in her ears a pair of great black earrings. She said she had no spare room, but she had a chamber with two beds in it that were occupied by her son and a boarder. She could have them sleep in one bed and I could have the other if I was willing to



Ecclesfield

accept such an arrangement. Evening was at hand, and by then I was thankful to get in anywhere, and so the thing was settled.

I did not sleep overwell that night, for my room-mates snored and puffed in the most wretched manner. Added to this I was startled in the first gray of the next morning by a great rapping on the walls of some room neighboring; and then one of the fellows in the other bed said, "Walt, get up!"

Walt was Mrs. Stringer's son. He was helping do a job of masonry some distance away and had to be up at five o'clock. His mother always waked him by rapping on the walls of her room just across a little hallway. In a few minutes Walt was stamping down the stairs to the kitchen, where he would heat a mug of tea for himself over the gas burner, and then hurry off to begin his day's labor at six o'clock.

The other young man worked in a colliery a mile away. The colliery had two gangs of laborers and he belonged to the second one. His work began at two in the afternoon, and he was at it steadily with a single short pause for lunch till half-past nine in the evening, when he came home and had supper. Ten o'clock in the morning was his getting-up time. The first thing he did when he came downstairs was to sit by the fire and have a smoke. Then he washed up, put on his vest and necktie and brushed his hair. The colliery was running half-time only, and his wages for three days a week was probably less than ten shillings. The coal vein he worked in was not thick enough to allow the men to stand upright while they dug. It was a surface pit running back into a hillside, and they walked into it stooping and got down on their knees to swing their pickaxes. However, Mrs. Stringer's boarder said he thought it was easier to dig that way than standing.

My first day at Ecclesfield was one of fog, wander-

ing showers, and stray gleams of sunlight with a few thunderclaps and a sprinkling of sleet added for variety. The weather kept me indoors till afternoon, when I went to a wedding at the church. I entered just as the ceremony was beginning. It took place in the chancel where a lonely knot of friends was gathered about the pair being married, and where a clergyman in his robes with dolorous tones, was going through the long service. There were kneelings and risings and responses and a marching far up to the altar in the dim recesses of the chancel for the final vows and admonitions. In the main part of the church were a few children and about a dozen women looking on from afar and whispering comments to each other. Outside, along the path through the churchyard, were many more loiterers, anxious to see the couple on their way to the coach, that awaited their coming at the gate.

The ceremony in time was ended, and the wedding party marched down the middle aisle. At the head of the procession were the clergyman and his assistant, and behind them walked the callow young people who had just been united, while a straggling of friends and sightseers brought up the rear. The red-faced young groom as he stumped along looked awkwardly around and waved his hand to his cronies and smiled as if he thought it had all been a good joke.

A little after the wedding a funeral from next door to my lodging-place went up the lane. Every one was on foot,—mourners, bearers, and the curious crowd of dirty children, and the women with shawl-covered heads, all tramping along unconcernedly through the mud and rain.

Toward dusk there were signs of clearing, and I went for a walk far up a great hillslope at the back of the village. I did not return till the darkness was gathering, and when I reached Ecclesfield the gas-lights were flaring at long intervals on its dingy streets and byways. When I turned into the side lane and approached my lodging-place, I was startled to find a crowd gathered there, while from the next-door neighbor's backyard came the sound of rough, high-voiced talking. The lane was full of dark figures hanging about the yard gate or looking from the near doorways and corners. I pushed on till I reached Mrs. Stringer's kitchen. The room was deserted, but I went in and waited. After a time the disturbance outside grew quieter, and my landlady returned. She said a man had died next door the day before, and that the trouble at present which caused all the noise and drew the crowd was due to a relation of the deceased who had been appointed trustee of the property. He had been drinking, and had called to tell the women of the family that he was their master now. Mrs.

Stringer said a man who went crazy in his drink ought not to be allowed any drink, and it was a shame to be kicking up a row in the house when there was a dead body in it, and he a relation, too.

This occurrence led to her telling me of a man she knew of long ago who was a terrible drinker, and one day when he was dead drunk some of the men took him down in a coal pit. When he came to, he was in the dense blackness of the under-world with a few dim lights twinkling here and there in the caverns. The men who brought him thither told him he was dead and buried and in hell. A look around convinced him that they spoke the truth, and such was the impression on him that he never drank afterward.

When I came down to wash at the stone sink in the kitchen the second morning of my stay at Mrs. Stringer's, it was seven o'clock. Everything was quiet and gassy and cold, but when I returned from a short walk the street door was open a crack and there was a blaze on the kitchen hearth and Mrs. Stringer was hastening the boiling of a pot by blowing the fire with the bellows. Two small grandchildren, who had come on a visit and had occupied the bed with their "Granny" that night, were sitting together in one chair and watching her intently.

This was Mrs. Stringer's washing day. So was

every day ; for it was by taking in washing that she in part made her living. She did her scrubbing at the stone sink under the small south window, and the atmosphere had a soapy odor from morn till

Afternoon in the Kitchen

night. But, besides washing, she did coarse sewing, and, on the shelves in the next room, she had a few dress goods that she sold on commission for a Sheffield shopkeeper.

Mrs. Stringer had been a widow for eleven years.

Her husband had earned good wages, but he was very free with his money and a hard drinker. Sometimes, with his drinking and treating, he would spend a whole sovereign in a single evening. One night when he had been up the long slope behind the town to the neighboring village of Grenoside he returned late and unsteady with drink. In coming down the hill in the gloom he fell into a quarry. He had strength enough to crawl out to the roadside and there was found about midnight. His wife had been sitting up waiting for him and expecting him ever since eight o'clock. They brought him in without any forewarning, and he died within an hour. Mrs. Stringer had never been right in her nerves since, she said.

This second day in Ecclesfield was bright and sunlit, and I spent nearly all of it out of doors wandering about the village and the country surrounding, trying to establish some relation between it all and my favorite juvenile author, Mrs. Ewing. I did not succeed very well.

The village is built on the lower slope of an immense hill much furrowed by ravines. It is very crooked, its stone houses are mostly weather-beaten, blackened, and crumbling, its streets slimy with mud, the air dense with haze and ill-smelling smoke, and the people whom I saw were shabby in dress and heavy and stupid in manner. It seemed an environment entirely out of har-

mony with the delicacy and sweetness of Mrs. Ewing's writings, and I wondered that she could find inspiration for such beautiful work in a village so squalid.

Yet the region in itself is attractive. The great green hills roll and tumble all about, and all the slopes are carefully cultivated. But as soon as the farm-lands reach the borders of the village there is naught but huddled, grimy buildings gathered in a dirty heap in the hillside hollows.

The one oasis of the village is the vicarage. It stands just behind the dark old parish church, a plain stone dwelling with tidy grounds and pleasant fields about and an overlook across a long reach of valley. The vicarage was Mrs. Ewing's birthplace, and at the time of my visit her father, "Dr. Gatty" still made it his home. He had been the Ecclesfield vicar for sixty years, and Mrs. Stringer told me he was "a very good preacher — he's always had such a voice."

Of Dr. Gatty's famous daughter my landlady said, "'Julie' was what they always called her here in the village. She was always a small body and she never had very good health. She and her sisters used to have a governess, but Mrs. Gatty teached 'em a lot, too. Julie used to visit a deal about the village and she was always good to talk wi'. Her mother was a real lady and Julie was like her.

"When Julie married — it was a weddin', hers! She

English Ricks

was thowt more of than most hany one aboot here. She taught in the hinfant school, Sundays, and we all knew her, and we all liked her. The children all come out in white to her weddin' and every one had flowers. One little child, that couldn't much more'n walk, gave Julie a whole basket of 'em. There were hardly a dry face in the church that mornin', because we all thowt Julie were goin' away.

"And she did go away, and we never saw her much afterward; but whenever she did come back, she were always so nice goin' around to see all her old friends."

XIV

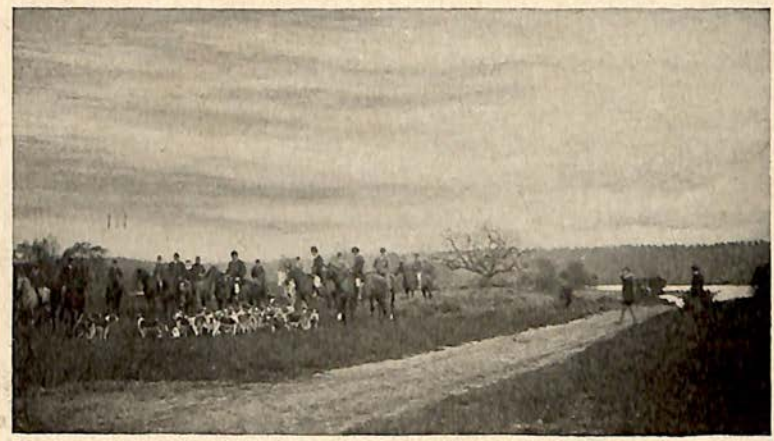
A PEEP AT THE GENTRY

THE gentry are people of inherited wealth or position. A retired tradesman or farmer, whatever his fortune, would hardly be accounted a "gentleman" unless he was knighted or had bought some ancient estate of a good deal of pretension for his home. Even then, the fact that he was naturally plebeian would not be forgotten by most.

It seemed to be the opinion of the general public that the gentry were, in the main, not of much value as a part of the national life. The best of them study politics and statecraft, or some branch of science, or they interest themselves helpfully in their tenants and home villages. But the large majority, after being sent as young men to Oxford or Cambridge, settle down to a life of indolence and the pursuit of pleasure. Their greatest accomplishment is very likely the ability to ride well after the hounds, and their finest boast is of the times they have come in first in the hunt.

But while a fox chase is one of the most spirited

pastimes of the gentry sportsmen, it by no means dulls their relish for the pursuit of lesser game. A stranger on English roads and lanes is surprised that in so populous a country he should see such numbers of rabbits, pigeons, partridges, and other wild creatures. That this field life so abounds is largely due to the gentry's love of sport. The laws are strict against shooting or trapping out of season, and every large estate has its gamekeepers to look out for the interests



A Meet of the Hounds

of the game and make war on trespassers. Nature is not left to its own chances of luck or mishap, but the game is in every way assisted to thrive and multiply. You will often see a good-sized field dotted over with

coops where some gentleman is raising pheasants; and the gamekeeper is always ready to pay a shilling a dozen for the eggs to any one who chances on a wild nest. These are set under hens, and the chicks are cared for till September, when they are let loose and driven into the woods. The keeper goes regularly with a bag of grain to feed them until the shooting season opens the first part of October. One needs imagination to pretend there is any wildness in creatures brought up that way. Still, there is no lack of enthusiasm among the hunters. Men who, the week before, in London, would not go across the street without hiring a cab, will tramp twenty or thirty miles a day. A man thinks nothing of the distance he travels if he is having "sport." The hunters, each armed with several guns, go half a dozen in a group to some covert agreed on, and a squad of boys deploys into the woods, and, tapping along on the trees and undergrowth, they make the pheasants run along before them. When the sportsmen see the birds approaching, bang, bang, bang, go the guns as hard as ever the men can shoot. The volley will last without a pause perhaps for half an hour, and by the end of the day the party has slaughtered many hundred head of game.

The greatest trial of the sporting gentry is poaching, and though there is far less of it now than there was in the early half of the century, it is still a good ways

from being numbered among the lost arts. In the late summer the traveller sees from car windows frequent fields dotted over with low bushes a rod or two apart. The leaves still cling to them, and if there were not so many, one would fancy they were small branches torn from the trees in a gale. Really they are thorn bushes set firmly in the ground by the gamekeepers on the newly cleared grain fields. Such fields are the resort of the partridges, and poachers are fond of dragging their nets at night over the stubble and capturing the birds crouching there. The net used is likely to be twenty-five feet long and five feet high, and it will get torn and useless in a field guarded by thorn bushes.

A Lodge at the Entrance to a Nobleman's Grounds

This net-dragging is undertaken on nights that are dark and rainy. It is done very quietly. You might hear the whir of a bird as it dashes into the net, or see an occasional short flash of a dark lantern, but that is all. If the suspicions of the keeper are aroused, he calls his dog, arms himself with a stout stick, and tries to steal up close to the poachers and see who they are before they take flight. Sometimes the poachers hold their ground and there is a stiff fight. It is said that a clever poacher will make five or ten pounds a week. Expeditions are carefully organized, and a great amount of this stolen game is shipped to London. The poachers are hard characters. Often they are social outcasts; for when a man gets the name of being a habitual poacher, it is difficult for him to find employment.

On bright nights the poachers avoid the opens and look for pheasants in the woods. The birds roost in the trees; and to get a sure shot at one, the established way is for the hunter to move till he brings the bird in line with the moon. To deceive the poachers, the keepers often nail, high among the branches, a wooden bird roughly cut out and touched up with paint. In the dimness of the night, it passes readily for a live bird; and the poachers are welcome to blaze away at it as long as they choose. Years ago great serrated-jawed man-traps used to be set for poachers. These

are no longer employed; but on large estates night guns are still set across paths, and everywhere a great deal of ingenuity is expended in making the way of the evil-doer hard.

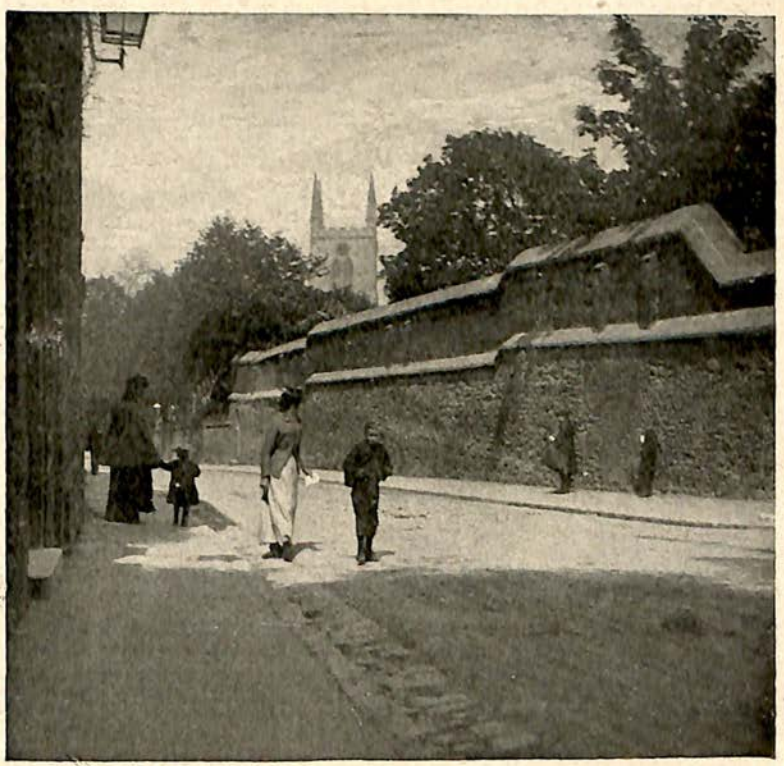
The homes of the gentry are more retiring than those of the lower classes. They do not stand so near the roadways, and there are grounds about them where landscape gardening is indulged in. The street view of a gentleman's house in a country village is almost sure to be cut off by a high wall or hedge and by the shrubs and trees that grow thickly before it. Privacy is sought as a chief virtue; and the house not only hides in foliage, but it faces away from the public road. You have to go around to what is the rear, as we Americans would think, in order to see the front of a mansion. There you find a pleasant lawn, shade trees and winding paths, flower-beds and a hothouse. A gardener has charge of all this, and his cottage is probably not far away — near the stables. The humbler gentry have grounds that are quite curtailed and houses of very moderate size; but those who can afford it live on what look like great ancestral estates, and their mansions are large and massive and stand far back from the highway in the midst of extensive parks. The greater the wealth, the larger the grounds and the greater the number of servants in the little army necessary to run such an establishment. The titled gentry

A Manor-house

stand highest in the social scale, and they, as a rule, are the ones who carry the most style in their homes. In some cases the gentleman's home is an ancient castle —with modern conveniences, of course — or a "palace," and the park round about is large enough to build a city on. These park-surrounded mansions of the gentry are scattered everywhere through the country, like plums in a pudding. No matter what road you travel, you will catch a glimpse of one of these fine mansions every few miles.

The gentry visit a good deal back and forth, going and coming in their carriages or on horseback. They

are very much at home in the saddle, and are far better pedestrians than Americans of the same wealth. Still, it is the peasantry and tradespeople who walk most. Necessity compels in their case; and men, women, and children, whether for business or for pleasuring, do a vast deal of long-distance tramping. A



The Street Walls of a Gentleman's Estate

country woman of the lower classes will undertake eight or ten miles of an afternoon and think nothing of it.

Of the local gentry whom I saw or heard about in my journeyings the one who interested me most was a man known to the inhabitants of his home region as "The Squire," a title that seemed particularly appropriate in view of the fact that he was a large landed-proprietor. He was a fine type of the country aristocracy, a man of good character and ancient family, public-spirited, and much beloved by the people of his neighborhood. His ownership extended over a track six miles long and three wide, including within its bounds several villages and a large number of scattered farms.

So far as he can the Squire leases the farms, but agriculture has not prospered of late in Britain, and many of the farms are tenantless. The responsibility of running the tenantless farms falls on the Squire himself — a state of things not at all to his liking; for such farms, no matter how competent the bailiff is who oversees the management of the estate, are sure to deteriorate and the buildings on them gradually fall into dilapidation.

The Squire's mansion is known as Hawstead House. It is a fine old stone building, much overgrown with ivy, standing in the midst of a great park of grassy hillside, which is broken now and then with groves of trees. Chance made me acquainted with the Squire and he in-

In a Gentleman's Park

vited me to visit him. When the time came I was undecided which side of the mansion I should approach. Ordinary folk went around to an entrance at the rear, and in the fear that the front door was reserved wholly for the aristocracy I betook myself to the back way and was soon in the august presence of the butler. He was a smug, solemn-looking fellow, just as butlers, coachmen, and other serving men are the world over. Their calling for some reason or other seems to have a decided effect on their features and manners.

The butler took my name in to his master, and finding that the Squire was engaged for the moment he did the honors of the house by asking me what I would have to drink. When the Squire was at liberty the butler ushered me into the big front hall with its dark winding staircase, heavy furnishings, and oak panelling hung with weapons and curiosities. The Squire, a tall, vigorous man with a closecropped, gray mustache, was very cordial, and when I made known my desire to see something of the house interior he very readily became my guide. The original house had been added to from time to time by its long line of owners so that now it was an uncertain old structure, with rooms on many different levels and with frequent corridors and hallways that crooked and turned and went, one knew not whither. It was rather fascinating — the great rooms with their high ceilings, their oaken walls, their

numerous oil portraits, and their wide, many-paned windows. I looked up the gaping chimney flues from

A Country Squire's Walled Garden

the big fireplaces, but there were crooks in them that kept me from seeing clear to the sky. The Squire said that men-sweeps continue to climb them when they needed cleaning. Some of the hallway walls were hung with fine old tapestries, and under one of the stairways was a secret hiding-place. You would not suspect it was there except you were making a careful search for such a niche. The Squire took out the

panelling and I stepped inside while he put the panelling in again. A little light streaked in from cracks in the stairs, but I did not much fancy the situation. One could lie down in the place at full length, but he could not stand upright. The last room I visited was the library. Its walls were lined from floor to ceiling with volumes in leather bindings, and so many of them

An Ancestral Hall

were old and rare that the place was one calculated to throw a book-lover into ecstasies.

The tour of the house was a great pleasure, and the

Squire was so kind and friendly and his personality so attractive that I came away with more of a liking for the aristocracy as exemplified by him than was perhaps proper in a subject of our American republic.

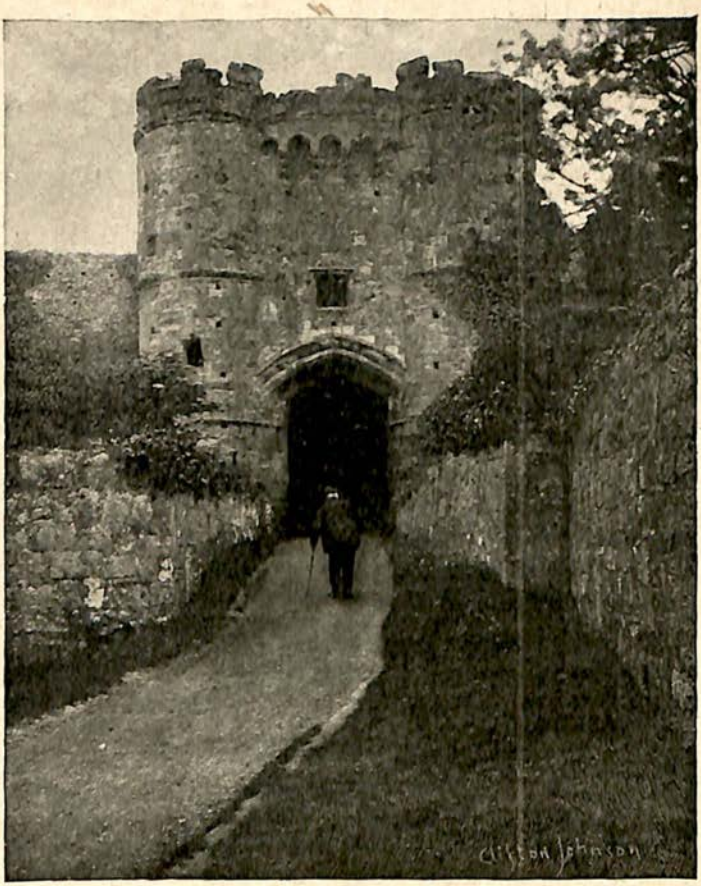
XV

CASTLES AND CATHEDRALS

TO one who lives in a country that has no mediæval past there is nothing in England that so stirs the imagination as an ancient castle. Towering walls, deep dungeons, knights and ladies, brave deeds, black crimes, and a strange old life are all interwoven in the mind in a fascinating fabric of mystery that makes the idea of a castle like a bit of fairyland.

I did not realize when I first reached England that its castles numbered many hundreds. I had the feeling that they were rarities, and I seized the first favorable opportunity to hunt up one. This opportunity came when I was in Bawtry, Nottinghamshire, and the castle was at Tichill, four miles distant — not too far to walk, I thought.

The afternoon I went in quest of Tichill Castle was warm and pleasant and very quiet. Nature seemed asleep, and humanity appeared to share in the lethargy of the day, for I saw hardly any one on the road save



A Castle Entrance

a tramp and a clergyman. The former stopped me, told a tale of woe, and begged for a penny. The latter whom I overtook sauntering along in my direction gave me a friendly greeting and we kept company for some

distance. At parting we shook hands and the clergyman said, "I hope we may meet in a better clime, hereafter."

I acquiesced in his hope, and yet I resented his remark a little, for the day was so perfect I thought England was good enough for me.

At length I entered Tichill village and walked down a long street of low, huddling houses, till on the farther borders of the hamlet I sighted masses of foliage and the steep mound of a hill and caught a glimpse of high gables and tall chimney-stacks. Then I passed under an arch of trees and came out in a pretty open where there was a little mill-pond and a pair of swans dabbling about on its surface. Just back from the water's edge a wide, stone-walled path led up to the castle gate. At last I was in the presence of a real castle, and there was no alloy in the pleasure of gazing at these gray outer portals, so massive and so old with the dappling shadows of the new-starting foliage falling on them from the big trees about. Under the walls skirting away to the right and left was the castle moat, a deep hollow full of water completely overhung by the bordering trees.

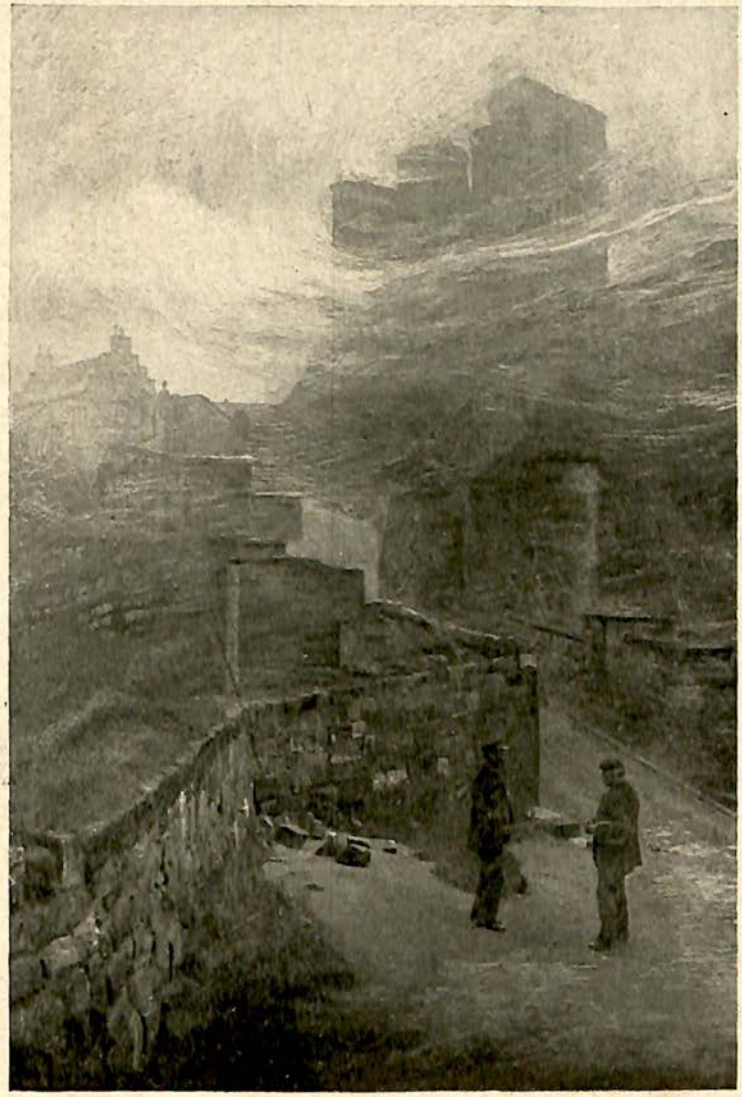
I went through the great stone archway of the castle gate presently, and found myself in a little park of close-clipped lawn with flower-beds here and there and shrubs and winding paths. A gardener was at work on the

lawn and he showed me around. But the gate was the finest thing on the place. The present Tichill Castle is a modern building, and though it looked very handsome with the tall trees at its back where the rooks were busy among their nests in the topmost boughs, it had not the charm of the ancient gateway.

I saw many castles in my later wanderings about England, some of them complete and habitable, but more having only ruined remnants left to suggest the impressiveness of what they must have been in their prime. They never lost their interest for me, however fragmentary; but I will only speak particularly of those of Scarborough, Warwick, and Kenilworth.

The day I went to Scarborough was hot, early, but grew cooler toward evening as the result of several heavy showers, that were accompanied with thunder and flashes of lightning. The fields were drenched, the tall grass was lodged down, and wide pools gathered in the depressions. It was eight o'clock when I reached Scarborough, but enough light still lingered to lend attraction to the idea of a walk to the castle. The streets were wet, and a fog was creeping in from the ocean.

The castle lay high on a wild ridge next the sea. It loomed strange and mysterious through the evening vapors as I climbed toward it, and was as dreamily illusive as a novel of the days of chivalry. One felt as if



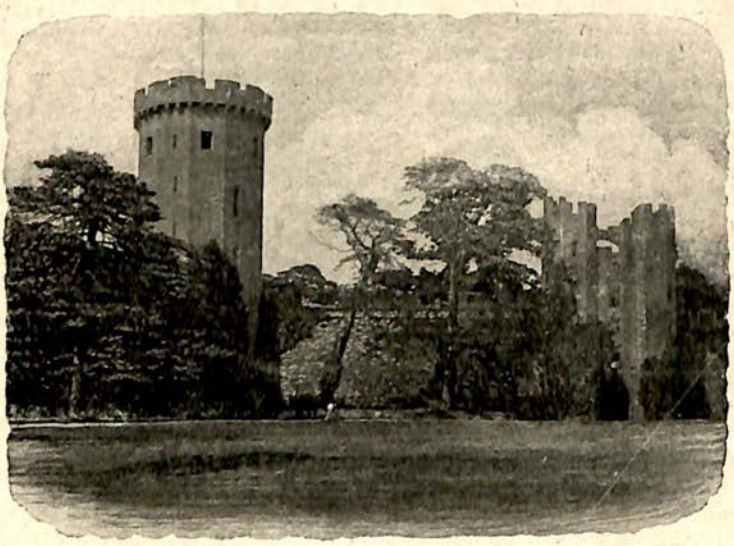
Scarborough Castle

time's dial had been turned far back, and the ears were intent for the sound of a horn from some turret to herald one's approach, or looked for the outcoming of some mailed knight from the gloomy portals of the entrance. But all was silent, deserted, dead, and in the mists the scene was like a vision of the sleep that might in a moment fade and disappear. I felt as if I were an interloper, an enemy trying to steal up under the walls without alarming the castle inmates.

Presently I went under a great arch and stood on the edge of a long descent that dropped steeply away to a stretch of sandy shore where the great surfy billows were rolling in from the vast blank of fog, seaward. On the other side of the ridge lay the town. I could not see it, but the distant sounds of voices, footsteps, the barking of dogs, the cries of little children, rose to me, and a few dim lights shone faintly in the depths. Yet there was no visible connection between all this and the little spot of ground clearly discerned close about where I stood, and the region below did not at all suggest a town. Rather, it was as if I was looking down on Hades from the high heavens floating in misty ether.

Once there was a rift in the fog, and the dark battlements along the hilltop came out clear and cold, and the near buildings below crept into sight and then other buildings beyond, till there lay the whole town circling

around a little harbor where the ships were rocking at anchor, and all the town was twinkling with lights. But in a few moments the vapors again closed in and the town was ingulfed and blotted out, and the defiant old walls of the castle went back to their dreams.



Warwick Castle from the Court Lawn

Next day, in the warm sunshine of a moist, clearing morning, I was again up at the castle and went within the walls and climbed the crooked, fortified roadway that led to the hilltop. On the height was a wide level of quiet grass-land where cows were grazing, and on the farther side a black row of cannon looking over

the cliff toward the sea. In one place was a little shanty where lemonade and light drinks were sold, in another some tenement-like soldiers' barracks, and near these several little garden patches close under the crumbling castle walls.

The surroundings of Warwick Castle are quite unlike those of Scarborough. A winding river flows close by, and there are great trees all about and meadows where the tall grasses grow. The castle is on a low hill and has a clean old town adjoining. It is in perfect repair and is the residence of the Earl of Warwick. After you pass through the outer gate you go up a winding lane sunk in the solid rock, and thrown into a cool twilight by the overhanging trees. Then you come out on a lawn and have the irregular walls and high towers of the castle before you. Follow the gravelled path and cross the bridge that spans the now dry and grassy moat and you enter a long arched way that runs under the massive inner gate. The porter opens the gate and you go into the broad square of lawn that makes the inner court, where a dozen or more peacocks are trailing about and every now and then showing themselves off by spreading out their tails.

A guide took a party of us through the castle. We saw the family's private chapel where they have prayers every morning under their own private chaplain with their own private organist and private squad of six choir

boys who come in regularly from the town to take part. The chapel was a snug little room just like a small church. We went through the armory, saw old guns and old swords, helmets, and quantities of other war-like relics.

Then we visited the red room, the gilt room, the cedar drawing-room, the great hall, private dining-room, etc. Altogether, it was a very giddy place and reminded one of a set of genteel auction rooms or a furniture warehouse or some sort of museum. Things looked as if made and set out for display rather than use. The furnishings all seemed too brilliant and fine and uncomfortable for one to ever hope to get on familiar terms with them. Gilt and color were everywhere, only this brilliancy was of the circus-wagon order, and was funny rather than impressive. One would expect to feel compelled to pose and talk book language all the time in such apartments.

By the depth of the window recesses you could see that the walls were close to ten feet thick, but the stone in most of the rooms was entirely hidden from sight by the wooden casings. There were many paintings on the walls — mostly portraits. The guide as we went along told who the originals of the portraits were, who painted which, and also settled their artistic merits for us. I was sorry for the guide. He had drawn in his breath and made those same remarks to fourteen different parties

that day. He looked tired of it, and whenever he had to tell the routine story of a room and its contents he would straighten up, fill his chest, and grind out a set description like a hand-organ.

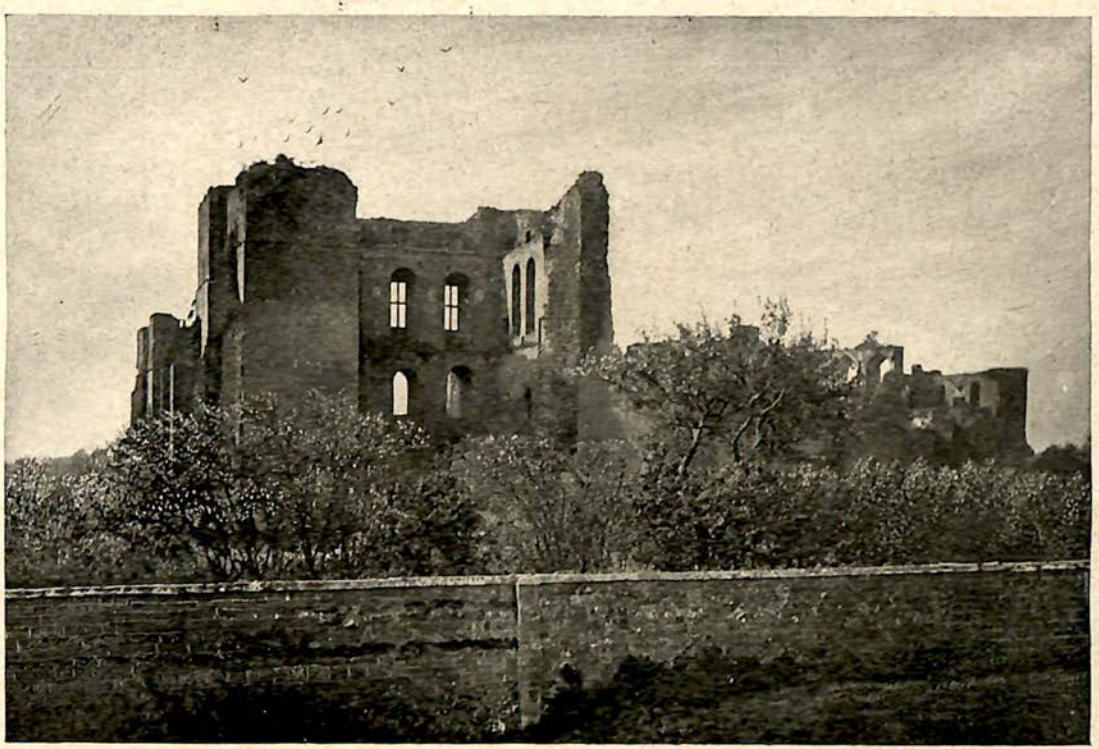
In the state bedroom was a queer old bed with a canopy over it that was hoisted high up toward the ceiling on lofty corner posts. Queen Anne, Queen Victoria, and other such people had slept in this bed. A table richly inlaid was pointed out in another room "valued at £10,000," and some enamelled dishes that were "priceless." When we finished our tour I never before had been so thankful that I was not an earl or a lord.

One other place I visited was the dungeons. The guide lit a candle, and we groped our way down a narrow stair into the depths of the earth. The air had a dead coolness and dampness, and I should think a person kept there, with only one or two stray gleams of light from the outer world coming down through the narrow apertures that served for windows, would very soon mould into death. The guide pointed out some deep grooves in the wall worn by the chains of the prisoners who had been bound there by the wrists, and he called our attention to certain rat-holes and some hollows in the stone blocks that seemed to have been made by the action of water. Yes, the guide said, the stones were actually water-worn — it was done by the "jew" that came in from the larger window.

If Warwick is one of the finest of English castles still used as a residence, Kenilworth, barely five miles distant, is among the finest of those in ruins.

On the evening that I arrived at Kenilworth town I found a boy on the station platform looking for a job, and I handed over my box to him. Outside, he had a wheelbarrow with a small dog tied to it. With the boy, barrow, dog, and baggage I went off up through the village to an ivy-grown old hotel a mile from the station called the "Queen and Castle," and there I engaged lodging.

Kenilworth ruin was just across the road from the hotel, and its great ragged towers were in plain sight over the massive outer walls that encircled the domain. It has such a famous history and is so connected with the stir and combat of the "Kenilworth" of Sir Walter Scott that it seemed strange to find it and its surroundings so tranquil. All the neighborhood had an air of permanent repose and uneventfulness that made those old days with their wars and intrigues and pageants as unreal as dreams. It is a graveyard of feudal unrest and splendor and has all a graveyard's quiet. I could not but feel that, in harmony with what it had been, there ought at least to be, even in the prosaic present, a stalking of midnight ghosts with all sorts of attendant fearful sights and sounds to give a proper snap to the vicinity.



Kenilworth

After a lunch at my hotel I walked by lanes and paths across the fields through many gates and over many stiles and made a long circuit completely around the old ruin. It was always charming, no matter whence I looked at it.

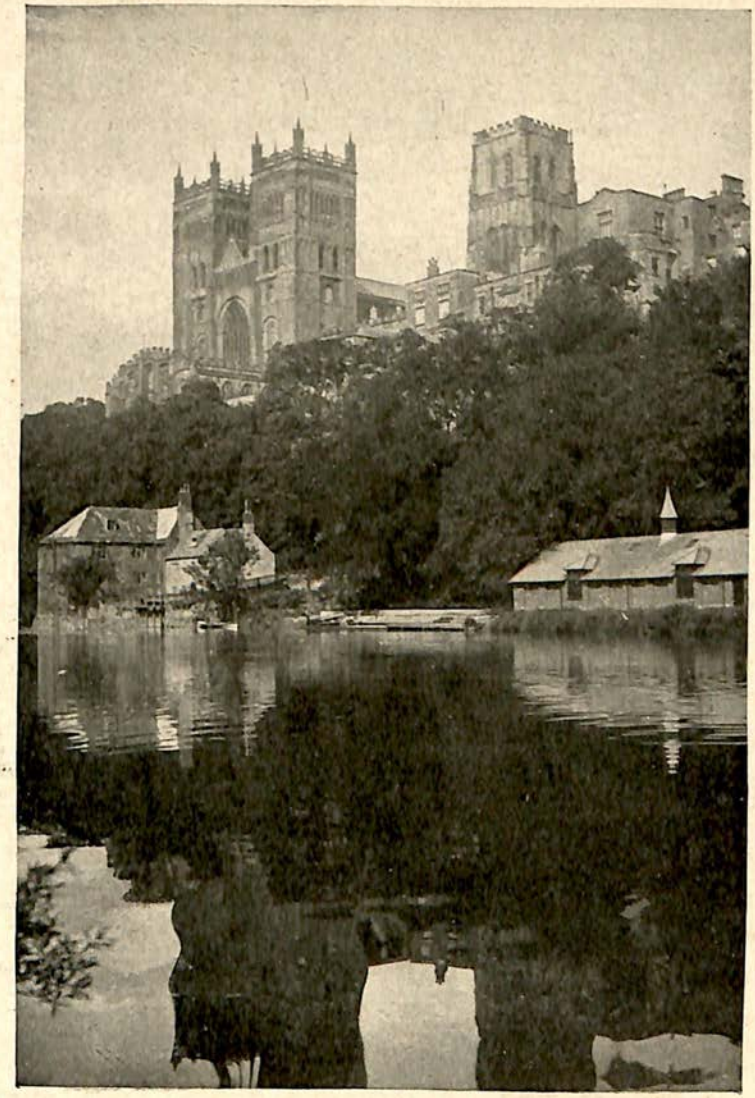
Next morning I paid sixpence and went into the castle grounds. The various structures that make up the castle are delightfully ruinous and much adorned with green tresses of ivy; but the lawn-like grounds did not match the weather-shattered aspect of the great walls, and I liked the castle best as seen from the fields outside. It took some time to go through all the passages and climb all the deep-worn steps and look down into the dungeons and up the hollow, topless towers. Along the sky line of the walls was a rank growth of grasses and shrubs, and a colony of jackdaws was constantly fluttering about the high crannies. On the lawn, not far from the walls, were several peacocks in a narrow enclosure bounded by a hedge. They seemed to feel low in their minds and from time to time would squall out in the most loud-voiced and distressing manner.

Kenilworth in its prime was notable for its size and beauty and though it has been in ruins for hundreds of years, it still is rich in hints of grandeur and architectural charm. Even aside from its historic interest it possesses great attractions, and no castle in the kingdom is better worthy of a pilgrimage.

Castles are often amid rural surroundings, but cathedrals are of course never found outside the city centres. Yet in almost every instance their lofty towers make them striking features of the landscape as seen from the farm regions for miles about. Aside from its height and size a cathedral has usually a conspicuous site, and it never fails to make itself felt beyond all the other buildings in the city.

How beautiful the many-towered cathedral is at Ely, as it lifts itself above the green trees and low red roofs of the town. How gracefully the single spires of Salisbury and Norwich leap upward into the blue sky. What massive grandeur there is about the cathedrals at York and Lincoln and Durham. How graceful the pinnacled tower of the one at Gloucester, and what a delightful great building Canterbury Cathedral is, whether seen from the crooked streets of the town, or from its grounds among the fine trees and lawns, or from the meadows beyond the village. Nearly all the cathedral towns have a beautiful little river close by, and it is hinted that the monks of old when they founded the cathedrals had an eye to the advantages of being close to a good fish stream.

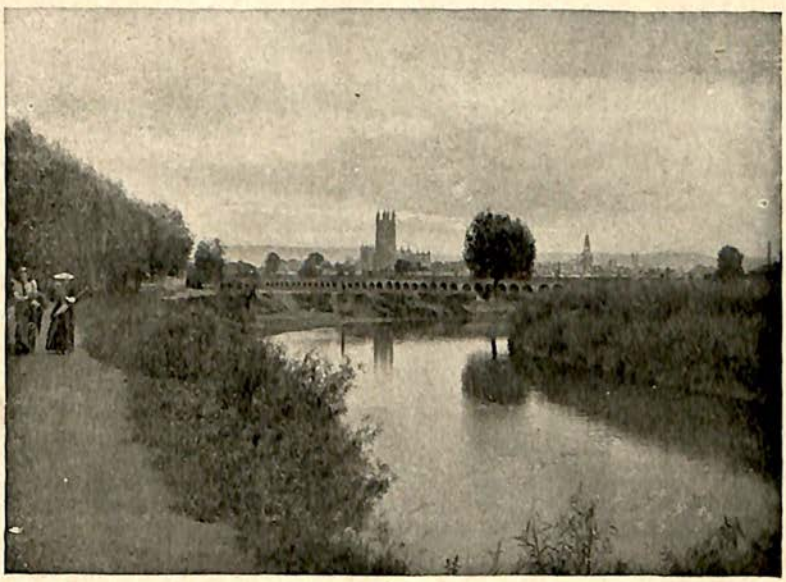
When near to a cathedral, it is its immensity that impresses you; when far off, it is its grace. I wondered what the effect of just the same buildings would be in our American cities. Large and grand as they



Durham Cathedral

are, I think they would lose a great part of their impressiveness. Our town dwellings and business blocks are so much higher than those of England that they would tend to dwarf and hide a cathedral in their midst — even a very great one.

The cathedral interiors I found a little disappointing. They seemed bare and cold and to lack color, and,



Gloucester Cathedral

as places of worship, I thought them overgrown and clumsy. Yet they were all impressively big. The lofty vacancy of their vast, vault-like aisles and chambers,

flanked by high pillars and domed by Gothic arches, made the people walking about on the floor appear like pygmies. It was this sense of great size that gave me most pleasure in the cathedral interiors; for, whatever their lacks might be, their vastness always gave them dignity.

XVI

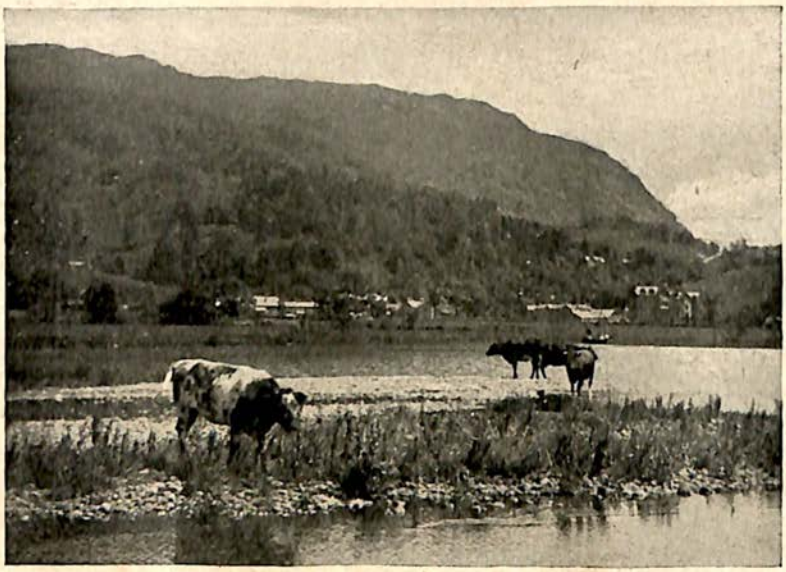
A GLIMPSE OF THE LAKE COUNTRY

ENGLAND, as compared with the other divisions of Britain, gives one an impression of unusual comfort, fertility, and prosperity. Nature smiles on it, and in its outward aspect — the gentle richness of its landscape, its tree-sheltered homes, and even its busy towns — it seems to a rare degree blessed and beautiful.

One feels the charm of England when one arrives from across the Atlantic, and one feels much the same charm in coming into it after touring in Ireland. The Irish bogs and poverty are in striking contrast with the attractiveness of England's well-tilled fields. So, too, when one crosses the line at Carlisle in coming south into England from Scotland, the difference seems quite marked; the country is at once better wooded, the fields more productive looking, and the hills mellower. Scotland is comparatively bare and rugged, and lacks the full, generous aspect of England that is so satisfying.

Perhaps I would have felt this contrast between

Scotland and England less had I not in journeying south from the former entered almost at once the Lake



Grasmere

District, than which no part of Britain has a greater reputation for beauty. It is set off from the rest of the kingdom as a sort of national park purely by public sentiment. Great numbers of city people have country homes there; and tourists, in the season, resort to it by thousands. Every care is taken to preserve its rural charm; and railroads are not allowed to invade its hills and valleys, but are compelled to stop on the borders.

I chose to enter the Lake District at Windermere. There I found myself at the end of the railroad, in a vacation village abounding in hotels and full of private houses, that were nearly all marked, "Apartments to Let." The suburbs of the village were plotted off in park-like grounds; and back among the trees were many fine houses — the homes of gentry who have business in neighboring cities. Through all this region run innumerable coaches, and their rattle in the village streets was almost ceaseless.

Aside from exploring Windermere and its vicinity, the only excursion I found time for while in the Lake District was one to Grasmere. The trip was made on a pleasant, cool day of clear sunlight — ideal weather for touring. Our coach passed along the northern borders of Windermere Lake, skirted the eastern edge of Rydal Water, and for the last mile was close by the shore of Grasmere Lake. The steep hills that heaved about, the frequent woods, the pleasant fields, and the dimpling lakes, so closely linked together, made the outlooks from the coach-top very delightful. Besides, the region was full of associations with many of England's famous writers, in particular with William Wordsworth.

At the quiet little village of Grasmere the poet lies buried. His grave, marked by a simple marble slab, is at the rear of the churchyard in the shadow of the

broad old stone church. A short walk distant is the lake, bounded by meadow stretches, with high, bare hills of easy outline at a little remove. In the midst of the lake is a grassy island crowned by a group of pines. Numbers of boats were moving about the lake. The occupants were some of them out just for the pleasure of rowing, others for the fishing. Cows were grazing along the shore or standing in the shallows. In the reedy borders of the lake a few pond-lilies were in hiding. The scene was a very peaceful one.

But not so on the roads, for every highway was full of coaches, carriages of all sorts, cycles, and pedestrians. The region was overflowing with tourists and sight-seers, and about every other person seemed to carry a camera.

One of the favorite walks from Grasmere is to Easedale Tarn far up on the hills. I had never seen a mountain tarn. I only knew of them in the pages of Sir Walter Scott as something very romantic, and the idea of visiting this tarn was quite attractive. The noonday sun was at its hottest when I started, and I had to go more than two miles along a baked country road before I came to the path that climbed the hills. Numbers of other tourists were making the same pilgrimage, but the heat and the increasing roughness of the route made the weak-willed and the fleshy lag, and many turned back.

Cultivated fields and wooded patches were presently left entirely behind and I was skirting the steep ridges of a mountain. Like all British mountains it was one vast, almost treeless, upheaval of pasturage, its grassy slopes only broken by occasional gray shoulders of rock thrusting through the turf and by here and there an expanse of gray green "bracken" (ferns).

A Mountain Tarn

The path most of the way kept along a small stream tumbling through a bare rocky hollow and in one place breaking into a foamy waterfall known as "Sour-milk Force." The source of the stream I at length found

was the tarn I sought — a little lake on the mountain top in a pocket of dark grazing slopes and craggy hills. On a terrace just back from the water's edge stood a lonely shepherd's hut where simple refreshments were for sale, and quite a number of people were lunching near by.

The return journey was comparatively quick and easy, and the views of the mountains and the outlooks over the wide depths of valley that spread around were much more enjoyable than on the toilsome way up. When I was again in Grasmere I was reminded that this was the day following Palm Sunday, and I learned that it was the local habit to commemorate the occasion yearly with a celebration. It began with a service in the church, after which the children, each bearing a garland, marched to the village green. The procession was led by a baby sitting in its little carriage, and the vehicle was so bedecked with flowers that it was entirely hidden, even to the wheel spokes.

As soon as they arrived at the green the children gathered about several long tables spread with white cloths and were served with bread and butter, cakes, and weak tea.

No sooner was the lunch finished than the children ran pell-mell to a toy-laden table under a wide-armed beech tree. The toys there displayed each cost a penny or so, and no child failed to buy something — the boys

usually a horn or other noise-maker, the girls some fancy object that appealed to the eye rather than to the ear. From that time on the tootings and snaps and cracks were continuous, and every child was eagerly running about to show its purchases and see what the others had bought.

A swing had been set up at one side of the green, and on the other side were two May-poles hung with gay ribbons. It was a pretty sight to see the children clinging to the ribbons and running about the poles. There was no lack of onlookers, for besides the mothers and older sisters who were out in force there were crowds of other folk who lingered on the borders of the green enjoying at second hand the merrymaking of the little people.

A young man with a great deal of good nature and love of fun twinkling behind his eye-glasses superintended the sports among the boys. One of these sports was a wrestling match. All the lads who cared to take part threw their caps into a pile and then a boy knelt before the pile while a companion put his hands over the kneeling one's eyes. That done, the blinded boy picked up the caps at random, two at a time. In this way partners were chosen and the boys paired according as their caps were handed out. Then a ring was formed and the pairs in turn wrestled. The beaten ones dropped out of the game. Then the victorious

contestants threw their caps in a pile as before, paired again, wrestled, and so went on till only one boy remained — the champion of the field.

Another sport that was entered into with enthusiasm was a sack race. About a score of boys got into bags and had them tied securely about their necks. When

Harvesting Oats in Westmoreland

preparing to start they all lay down in a row, but at the word "Go" they squirmed to their feet and hobbled away down the field. There was no end to the mishaps and tumbles, but they raced again and again. Small money prizes in this and other games were given to winners. The good-natured young man who acted

as judge and director distributed the prizes. He seemed to have an unlimited supply of coppers in his pockets.

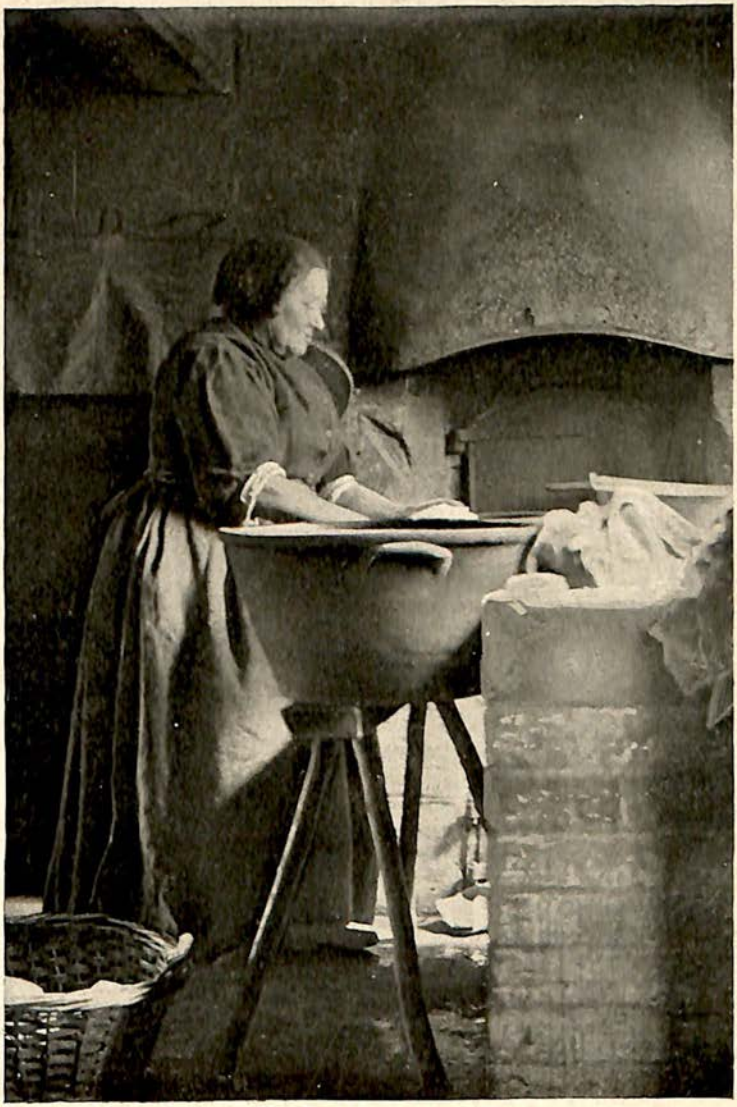
The boys in their play were often rough and loud. The girls were much quieter and less bumptious. They appeared to have more responsibility than the boys, for most of the older girls had younger members of the family in their charge, and in the view of the care-takers these toddlers had abnormal tendencies to stray away and get into trouble. The result was that when one of the larger girls engaged in a game you would see her at its close on an anxious quest after one of the little ones that had meanwhile wandered.

The morning following my Grasmere trip was rainy, but the weather cleared at noon and I walked from Windermere south into the farming region. The lake, ruffled into silver by a brisk breeze, was in sight much of the time. This body of water, ten miles long, is the largest lake in England.

In a roadside field I made the acquaintance of some men at work in the oats. An old man was reaping and two younger men followed after, binding. The former used a scythe that had a clumsy-looking triangle of canvas erected at the rear of the blade to catch the grain. On the end of the scythe handle was strapped what the man called a strickle, but what on the other side of the Atlantic is known as a whetstone.

While I was talking with the men three o'clock came and they went to the house for tea, and I accepted their invitation and went, too. The house and barns and sheds were all of whitewashed stone. A pretty porch with many flowering plants growing on either side overarched the kitchen entrance. The door here was massive enough for a jail. It was of oak, beaded with heavy nails, and the lock was something huge. The farmer showed me the key which was nearly a foot long, but he said something was the matter, and it wouldn't turn the bolt. He thought they would have to get a new lock sometime.

The kitchen was a picturesque interior with its stone floors, its blackened beams overhead, a tall clock, a dresser full of crockery, and many mugs and pitchers hung along the walls. The farmer's wife had just come in from putting out her washing. She said she had finished that morning a seven weeks' wash. Until the rains of a few days before there had been no water in their well for all that time. When she found I was interested in the old house she showed me through it, even took me upstairs by a crooked stairway, where the ceiling came so low near the top that unless one was more on his guard than I was, he got his head bumped. The floors of these upper rooms were warped and uneven, and their contents were in much disorder. The woman showed with pride a corner



Washing

cupboard full of quaint old china. There were many came to see this crockery who would like to buy it, she said, but it wouldn't be sold — not till after she was dead and buried, anyway.

After lunch I walked back to Windermere. I had found my farm acquaintances very pleasant and kindly; but their dialect was something of a drawback to easy intercourse. It was peculiar in intonation and strange in many of its words. Often I did not catch the meaning of what was said; and when they spoke among themselves, it sounded like a foreign language.

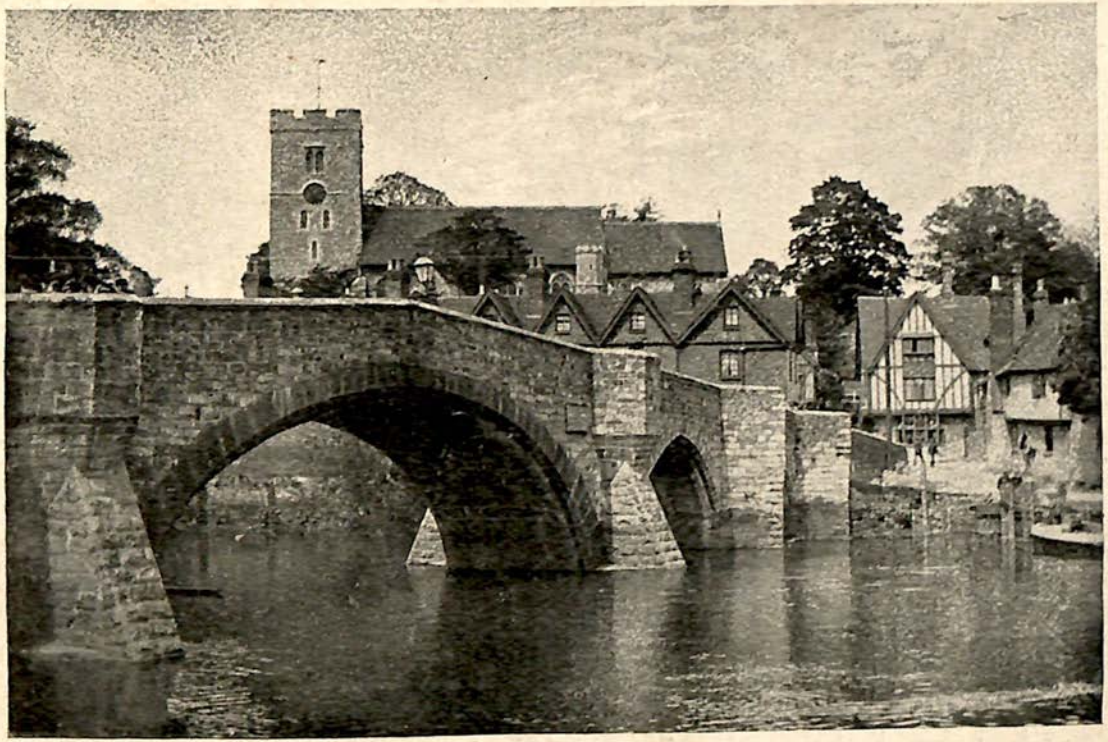
XVII

IN KENT AND SUSSEX

ONE of the most attractive parts of England I saw in my random journeyings was that about the beautiful old village of Aylesford in the county of Kent. Anything more luscious and charming than this fertile district with its fine trees and variegated hills and dales it would be difficult to imagine.

Aylesford is on a little tidal river called the Medway —a stream that, though narrow and very crooked, yet has a good many little steamers with barges in tow plying up and down it. All this traffic passes under a queer old bridge that humps itself over the stream in the midst of the village. The bridge has to have high arches to allow the boats to slip beneath easily, and as the banks of the stream are low just here, the highway has a steep climb going up to the peak of the bridge from the level of one shore and a steep descent getting down to the level of the shore opposite.

It was as picturesque a bridge as one could meet with, and the very first time I saw it I went down to



An Old Bridge

the bottom of a cottage garden close by to get a better view of it. A woman in the cottage noticed the object of my interest, and it was not long before she came down the garden path and interrupted my admiration of the rugged grace of the bridge by informing me that it was very old-fashioned and inconvenient and that there was talk of replacing it. The roadway that ran over it was only wide enough for a single cart to go along at a time with no space to spare even for foot-passengers. It is true there were bastions at intervals into which persons on foot were supposed to step when they saw a team approaching, but nevertheless the woman said lots of people had come near getting run over. I suppose her facts were correct, yet, after all, I would rather the old bridge should stand.

About two miles out in the country from Aylesford is an ancient Druidical monument known as Kit's Coty House, and every one in the region who recognized me as a tourist boasted of this Kit's Coty House and asked if I had seen it, till my curiosity was aroused and I went to have a look at it. I found the prehistoric relic on a hilltop in the midst of a large wheat-field. Three great slabs of stone are set up on edge, and another block, still larger, is hoisted on top so that together they form a sort of box with one side gone. As a "house" I did not think much of it, though it was undoubtedly sub-

stantial; but when one reflected on its great age and its possible connection with the mysterious Druids, it was quite impressive. To keep the public from carry-

Kit's Coty House

ing it off a high iron fence surrounds it — not that there is any danger of its being appropriated just as it is, in a lump, at one time; but in the course of years, if allowed, the relic hunters would carry away every splinter of it piecemeal.

In a field a quarter of a mile down the hill is another ancient group of stones. Some are large and some are small and they lie in a tumbled heap half hidden by a rank growth of nettles, briers, and grasses under sev-

eral young oaks. They are called "The Countless Stones," because it is said that you can never count them twice in succession and get the same number. I had an idea before I saw the stones that there was a great number of them set up in a big field like headstones in a cemetery, and the real thing was so unlike what I expected that I came near not noticing it. I saw no reason for there being any difficulty in counting the rocks; for at first sight the heap of bowlders did not look as if it could possibly number more than a dozen. But when I tried the counting and looked more closely, I found there were smaller stones half hidden, and that the whole made a very twisted mass. I got up to over twenty, and then I became uncertain as to whether I had counted them all or counted some twice and I gave it up. Some one had numbered the stones with chalk, but the numbers skipped about in as uncertain a way as the stones themselves and I found they did not assist me any. Still, numbering would seem to be a very good method to make sure of them if one would exercise patience.

When I left Aylesford, I took a train that carried me southward into Sussex. On the way I divided my attention between the beautiful views from the car window and the conversation of a party of laboring folk, who got in at one of the way stations and continued

for some time in my apartment. One of these fellow-passengers was a very sociable old man, whom the others addressed as Mr. Needles. He said he had just taken a glass of beer, and declared it made him "silly as a ship (sheep). I ain't used to it, ye know; hain't drunk beer before for seventeen years, and I could do without it for seventeen years more. But I

Reaping Barley

been to see the doctor lately, and he ordered it. One glass'll make me drunk for three days."

Mr. Needles plainly felt very happy, and the beer

seemed to have the further effect of creating a desire to expand his views on religion. He accepted the Bible literally, — that is, as it was interpreted at his chapel, — with certain additional points that he had thought out himself. The subject started with his saying that he and his "Missus" never ate any meat. They confined their diet to bread and butter and bread and cheese — "best food in the world." He had known a man once who ate bread and butter one week and bread and cheese the next week right through the year, and he was "fat as a pig." Even that much wasn't really necessary, Mr. Needles declared; and he believed you could get along without eating altogether. He said you could live on faith, but he qualified this statement, on reflection, by adding, "and a very little besides." The Bible said as much, "and didn't the Lord say, 'Come unto me, and I will give you life'?" and so he went on with a long and serious discourse to prove that one could live on faith, "and a very little besides."

In Sussex many windmills crowned the hilltops, and their odd shape and their wide-reaching, slow-swinging arms gave the landscape an aspect peculiarly interesting. As seen from a distance, the mills never appeared very large; and when, one day, I visited one, its great size was a revelation. It loomed up, as viewed close at hand, like a heavy-based church spire.

A Sussex Windmill

Sixty feet was its height, or, if you measured from the ground to the top of the sweeps, the distance was eighty-two feet. There was a good deal of room

inside the structure, too, though in this particular instance it was crowded full of machinery and bins and sacks of grain, so that elbow room was noticeably lacking. Attached to the base of the mill were several buildings used for storage, but there was no house connected, as is the case with some of the mills. In busy times, when the wind blows, the miller said they kept grinding day and night.

Aside from the windmills, the feature of Sussex that attracted my attention most was a vast series of mountain-like hills, their great, rounded forms perfectly devoid of any larger vegetation than grass and low shrubs. These big, bare, grazing "downs," as they are called, were especially strange to American eyes used to seeing all the hilltops wooded. I wondered that the sun did not parch their unprotected heights into deserts. No doubt it would in a climate less cool and moist.

XVIII

ROUND ABOUT STONEHENGE

THE railway station that is nearest to Stonehenge is at Salisbury. Stonehenge itself is ten miles distant on "The Plains." The village of Amesbury is quite close to the famous group of stones, but as there is neither railway nor any other public conveyance thither, the sight-seeing traveller, unless he is an uncommonly good walker, has to hire a carriage. I made the trip in a dogcart, at a cost of ten shillings. My driver kept his horse in a humping and uncomfortable gallop much of the way, except when we came to down-hill stretches. Then he let the horse walk. That is a way that English drivers have. Where an American would go fastest, they go slowest.

Soon after we left Salisbury town we passed a big hill fortified with great grass-grown rings of Roman earthworks, and then we entered Salisbury Plains. Of course everybody knows that these plains are great barren levels with hardly a tree to be sighted within the whole horizon. At any rate that was what I

thought *I* knew, but they are nothing of the sort. The district is one of big, long-swelling hills, and is full of cultivated fields. Tree clumps are frequent, and in the wet valleys the groves are quite extended

A Village Scene

and luxuriant. But as a whole the country is less fertile than most sections, and you find more grazing downs, less frequent farms and villages, and, except about buildings, no hedges. It makes an odd change from the rest of England to find one's self travel-

ling along on a level with the fields and in no way separated from them. In time we reached Amesbury, and my driver left me at a hotel. When I paid him he had fears a tip was not forthcoming and, after the manner of the English driver, begged for a few coppers "to get a glass of beer with."

It was already mid-afternoon and the sky was threatening, but as soon as I had disposed of my luggage I borrowed an umbrella and started for Stonehenge. The distance was two miles along a hilly road that was often overhung by fine trees. But when I neared the place I sought, the country changed to open fields and sheep downs.

I had not much notion of what Stonehenge would look like, and the first thing I imagined to be it proved to be a distant group of farm buildings. As soon as I was aware of my mistake I looked still farther into the distance and concluded I espied it on a remote slope where a scattered half mile of evergreens gave an impression of standing stones. When I saw the real thing I was disappointed. As I looked at it across a valley the group of stones was about as impressive as are those in the cemetery of one of our small New England villages.

But as I approached them they kept growing larger and larger, and at a close view they were most tremendous and astonishing. Their gray, lichened forms

were gathered in close circles about a central, open space of short-cropped turf. There were two inner circles of small stones about five feet high, much like stout fence posts, and two outer circles of great pillars that loomed up fifteen or twenty feet and that had enormous slabs laid on top of them extending from one to another. The stones were tilted at all angles and many of them had fallen. It seemed a wonder that all were not prostrate when one considered the great length of time that had passed since they were erected, but they are given stability by having their bases embedded about five feet in the chalk rock that underlies the thin soil. The whole group is encircled at a distance of six or seven rods by a low bank of earth on which there are two more stones: the one to the east called the sunrise stone, and the one to the west the sunset stone. Everything about the strange stones, in their situation and arrangement, made it easy to accept the theory that long ago this was a great, rude, roofless temple of the Druids; and in the imagination one saw these ancient priests performing bloody and mystical rites among the great pillars where now the peaceful sheep feed and the inquisitive tourist wanders. Another contrast to the barbaric stones was furnished by the flowers that brightened the turf; for the grass all around was gay with short-stemmed buttercups and daisies, and in places was mottled blue and

yellow with "Canterbury bells" and "ladies' thumbs and fingers."

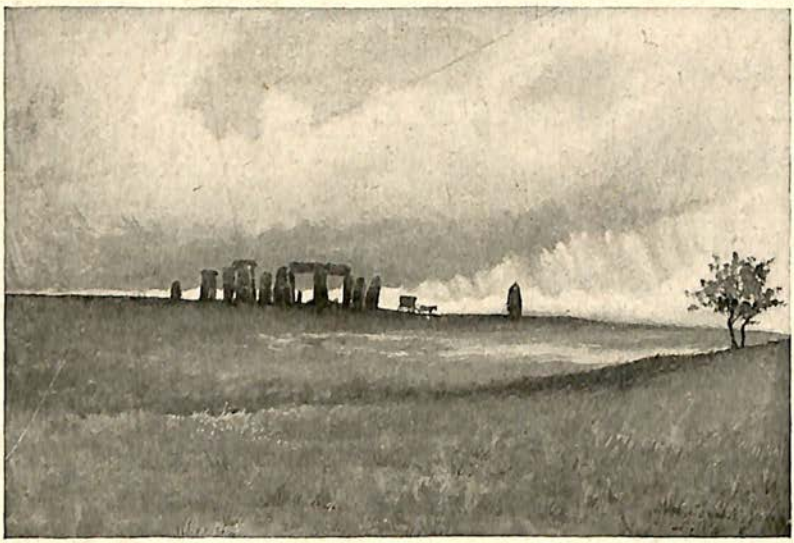
The spot occupied by the stones is a very lonely one. The soil of the uplands about is too lean to give large returns, and the only sign of human habitations in sight was a single huddle of farm buildings lying far up the slope. Amesbury was hidden in a hollow two miles away, and the region conveyed an impression so forlorn and deserted that it was a surprise to find close under the great stones of the temple a small, shiny, black-covered cart that looked like an undertaker's wagon. A white horse was feeding near by, and last, but not least, there was a little man with a red nose sitting on one of the fallen columns. At first I imagined he might be one of the Druids, though his overcoat and derby hat looked rather too modern; but he told me he sold photographs, and sure enough, inside the ancient temple was his stock in trade laid out on the stones. He said his name was Mr. F. H. Judd, and explained that he not only sold pictures, but he would take your likeness with Stonehenge as a background, or do "anything else in a professional way." He had been working in this line of business at Stonehenge now for twenty years. This had given him time to get the history of the place by heart.

Some of the interesting things that he told me, and that I suppose he tells all other visitors to the place,

were these: No one knows where the great stones that make up the temple came from. There is no rock of the same kind to be found anywhere in the regions near, and it is a mystery how the Druids, with the rude appliances of their time, could possibly have conveyed the stones the great distances they must have been brought, or how raised them into place and hoisted the immense blocks on top. Some of the stones are missing, but no trace of their whereabouts has been found. The two last stones to tumble fell scarcely one hundred years ago. Some gypsies had camped on the spot and undermined them in digging holes for their fires. Two others fell in 1620. There has been talk of setting the fallen stones up, but it has never amounted to anything. One American told Mr. Judd that he would give a million dollars for this lot of stones if he could get the privilege of removing them. He would set them up on American soil in or near some large city, build a fence around them, charge admission, and advertise it as the eighth wonder of the world. This speculator from across the seas told the Stonehenge photographer that he thought it would make a grand good show.

The afternoon sun was getting low, and presently Mr. F. H. Judd gathered up his belongings, caught his horse, hitched it to his cart, and bade me "Good evening." Big showery clouds were continually rolling

up and darkening the sky, and there were scraps of rainbow frequently forming and fading along the far horizon. This shifting gloom and light of the skies, added to the loneliness of the great plains, made a wild and mysterious background, very much in keeping with the rude, strange group of stones of the venerable temple. As I saw it that afternoon, the place had a magic spell that kept me loitering in the



Stonehenge

vicinity till darkness, with threats of a rainy night, drove me back to the town.

On the following day I took a look around Amesbury village. It lies in a wide valley through which

runs a charming little river called the "Avon." The lowlands that border the stream are very fertile, and everywhere are numbers of great, full branching elms.

The narrow Amesbury streets and lanes contain an uncommonly large proportion of quaint old houses with roofs of thatch and tile. On one of the lanes I came on some men unloading fagots before the doors of the cottages. A group of old women was looking on. They were haggling with the men and trying to induce them to give them fagots with larger sticks in them. After the men and their wagon had gone on, the old women would go over the different piles left them and their neighbors and exclaim over the great sticks some one else had got, and theirs so very small!

These fagots had each about one good-sized stick of cord wood in them and the rest of the bundle was brush. The bundles were bound with withes, and were about as large as a man could pick up in his arms and handle comfortably.

A question I asked one of the old women about the fagots led to an acquaintance that resulted in her inviting me to step into her cottage to see a parrot of which she seemed very proud. I acceded to her request and entered the tiny whitewashed dwelling in which the old lady lived all alone. Its thatched roof was getting ragged and mossy, and the wooden thongs which bound it were all sticking up through the straw

with broken ends. She said that the roof had not been touched for ten years. The thatch before that staid on twenty years, and "leaked that bad, she liked to 'a' been washed away before she could get it done over. Ah! these landlords like to see the money coomin' in, but it is another matter when it cooms to payin' anything out."

The living room, which, though small, took up nearly all the ground floor, was paved irregularly with flagging, and the walls were almost hidden by quantities of earthenware and knickknacks.

She said of these: "My 'usband were terrible for all this traffic. The peddler'd coom 'long, and my 'usband he'd say, 'I'd like one o' they.'

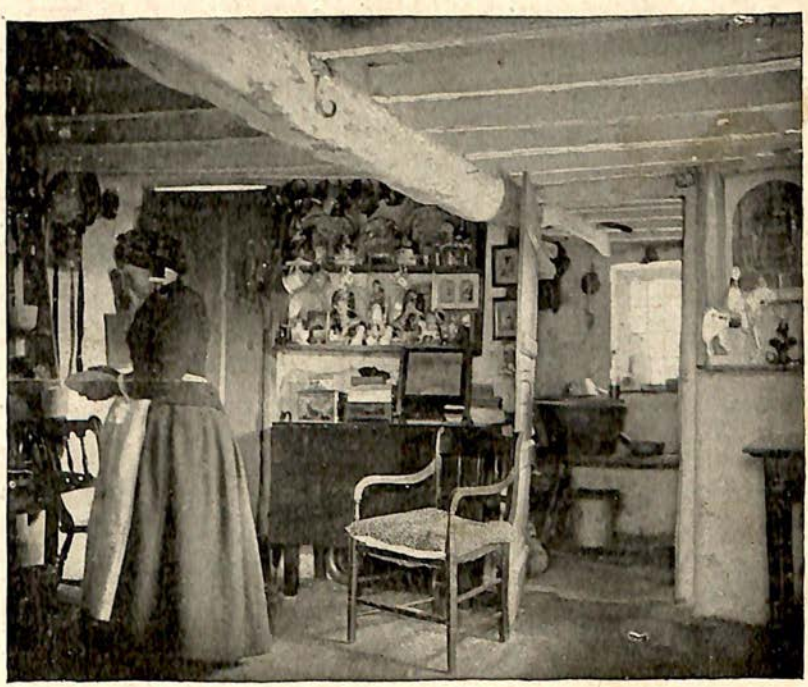
"'Beggar the things! I don't want 'em,' I'd say; but he would get 'em just the same."

There was a great fireplace at one end of the room with a modern grate almost lost within it.

"There's that stove and a hoven," she said; "I got that grate put in. It'll 'ave to bide when I leave; but when I go, if the new ones that cooms to live 'ere won't pay for 't, I'll smash it with the 'ammer."

The old lady while she talked with me sat in a big armchair by the fire. Near by was a little round table at which it was her habit to eat. At her elbow, too, was the parrot, to whom she addressed frequent remarks, and of whom she had much to tell.

"My son in London sent this parrot a purpose to be company for me," she said. "I'm learnin' her to



A Cottage Interior

talk what I can. She calls a woman that lives down here 'Alice,' and she tells the children, when she sees 'em, to go to school. 'Go 'cool, Joe!' she says. 'George, go 'cool!' She will laugh, too.

"Soon's ever I put on my hold 'at to go hout in the garden, 'Good-by,' she says.

"Won't she watch when I 'ave dinner! Sometimes I turns my back, like this, to eat an apple, 'What's 'e got?' she says. I can't get her to say, 'Good night,' or 'Good morning.'

"She flings every one of her victuals out when she's cross. I say to her, 'Is your nut gone, Polly?' and she says, 'Polly crack her nut, Polly crack her nut!' I covers her up at night, they be such chilly birds."

By and by the old lady rose and went to a closet-like little back room. She returned with a bottle and asked me if I wouldn't "take a drop."

"You ain't a teetot'ler, be ye?" she asked when I refused.

I said, "Yes," but she seemed to doubt it and she held the bottle at a tempting tilt over a mug while she asked me again to have a drop.

"Well," she said, "I'll 'ave some myself then. I'm no teetot'ler; neither do I get drunk, thank God!

"I know these teetot'lers," she continued; "they has their wines and rum and whiskies and things when they's sick."

My hostess said she was close to eighty years old. She had worked till she was seventy-eight and then she came on the parish. Now she was allowed eighteen pence and a gallon of bread each week. A gallon of bread is eight pounds. It was delivered in two instalments, and the old lady had to go after it

each Thursday and Saturday. She said the bread was made by the baker who would contract to do it cheapest, but it was very good bread.

Eighteen pence would hardly keep her in coal in the winter, and there was the rent, thirty-five shillings, that had to be paid every year the first Monday in November. "If we don't pay it right up prompt," she said, "we soon has somebody round after us."

Her cottage was very small or the rental would have been more. Yet few laborers pay over one shilling and ninepence or two shillings a week for their cot-

The Allotments

tages. Rentals nearly always include a plot of garden ground; and, on the village outskirts, is a piece of land called "The Allotments" where the laborers have the privilege of hiring a few rods of land if they choose. In the patchwork of the allotments the men are often working in their spare hours in the evening, and the women are frequently seen there wrestling with the weeds in the daytime.

My hostess in continuing her story said: "I had a son in Australia and he always said he'd keep a house over my head as long as I lived. He sent me money right along. Then he died and his wife died. They had eight children. The oldest one was a girl at service, about twenty-five years old. She sends me a trifle occasionally, but if she was to get married perhaps she couldn't send me anything any more. Thank God a'mighty she's got a good heart."

The rough kitchen ceiling came down very low, and the apartment was only suited to short people. The old lady said she used to have a lodger. "He was a boy when he coom here," said she, "not more'n that high," putting her hand about three feet and a half from the floor; "but he grew and kep' a growin' till he couldn't stan' anywhere, up straight, but right atween the beams. Then he said he thought he'd 'ave to leave."

She told me the workhouse, of which she would her-

self be an inmate were it not for her Australian granddaughter, was like a jail. They had to work hard there. "The men is put to breakin' stone and pickin' yoakum — leastwise, those that bide there a night is. Then there's a great garden and the men goes out and does the garden. There's a bell to ring 'em up in the mornin', and a bell to ring 'em out, and a bell to ring 'em in, and a bell to ring 'em to bed."

This routine seemed to my hostess a great trial and she looked forward with dismal foreboding to the time when she could not pay her rent and would have to become a part of the workhouse machine. It is not to be inferred, however, from her sombre anticipations that life at the workhouse was needlessly hard and tyrannical.

The old-time English workhouse that exists as a sort of nightmare in the novels of a half century ago has ceased to be. The building is usually modern and substantial and neat, and the inmates are kindly treated and kept in comfort so far as I could learn. Yet their freedom is curtailed, and they have lost the surroundings and companions that have made home dear to them. It is the custom to assist the worthy poor who can partially support themselves, as in the case of this old woman, with outside help.

I went with her presently to her little garden back of the house on which she mainly depended for the

income that paid her rent, and when we finished the tour of that I returned to my hotel.

That afternoon "John Jenning's World Renowned Steam Galloping Horses" came to town. John Jenning's big wagons with their high colors and showy lettering had the look of a small circus caravan, and in the early evening I went down to the green and saw they had set up a steam roundabout there. The whistle of the engine was tooting shrilly to arouse the community and bring out the lovers of pleasure, and a crowd, mostly of young people, was already gathering. Some looked over the hedge from the roadway, some gathered in a group at the gate, but the larger part were on the green hovering around the hobby-horses. There were about three dozen of these little painted ponies under the round canopy, and every one had its mouth open and lips drawn back in a manner meant to be high-spirited but which looked decidedly vicious.

The horses were arranged in a triple circle within which were the steam-engine and some revolving mirrors and five dummy figures with movable arms. The two largest dummies, which were nearly life size, had drums hung from their shoulders which they were pounding in their stiff-elbowed way. One of the smaller figures was beating time, and the other two manikins were jerking and rattling triangles, cymbals,

and such things at a great rate. A steam-organ kept playing all the time so that, all in all, the roundabout had an air of enticing abandonment not easy to resist.

Other attractions, set up near by, were three swings, a cocoanut court, and "The Alexandria Shooting Gallery." At the rear of the roundabout were three wagons fitted up for the troupe to live in. One of the wagons was the home of a baby. Its father brought the little thing out in the early dusk and gave it a ride on one of the galloping hobby-horses. That made it laugh and clap its hands.

By the time the show was well under way the sun was setting in the west. It fired the clouds, and their flames streamed high up into the sky. Then their fires cooled down gradually into faint low-lying embers, and some of the attendants of Jenning's World Renowned lit a lot of flaring kerosene torches, and the revels on the green continued far into the night.

XIX

LIFE AT AN INN

THE ordinary English inn is something halfway between a hotel and a saloon. Only an occasional one will take roomers; yet while the main business is confined to selling liquors, an important item of trade consists in serving the travelling public with light lunches. Many hostelries do better still and will set forth an elaborate dinner when it is called for. But above all else the inn as an institution is notable for the unanimity with which its bar and taproom draw to themselves the local population. The inn is the villagers' chief public meeting-place, the centre of the community socially, and as such possesses special interest.

I wanted to see country life from this vantage point, and it was with considerable satisfaction that I succeeded in getting lodging at an inn known as "The Gray Goose," in a village of southern England named Hazelford. Here I made two short stays of a few days each, between which there was an interval of about a fortnight.

The Gray Goose was kept by a Mr. Rickalls. He was a man of middle age who, until within a short time, had been a shoemaker. He was a good workman, and had been doing well at his trade, but shoemaking was neither so profitable nor so gentlemanly a business as keeping a "public." The ex-shoemaker's family was pleasant and intelligent. A daughter was a school-teacher. She waited on the bar after school hours. Mrs. Rickalls, too, was often in the bar serving the drinkers. A barrel of beer and quantities of other liquors were sold at the inn every day, yet the village was a very quiet little hamlet of hardly a dozen houses, with a pleasant farming country round about of green fields and hedgerows and scattered dwellings.

The view that one gets of mankind about an English inn is not a cheerful one. Drinking, smoking, spitting, and low-minded talk are omnipresent, and the rooms the men gathered in evenings at the Gray Goose grew so filthy with the day's accumulation of stale tobacco, saliva, and beer-spillings that a vigorous scrubbing out each morning with soap and water was absolutely necessary. This daily cleansing made the apartments presentable, but it could not take away their rank, ingrained odor which, to some extent, permeated the whole house.

The inn, before the shoemaker took it, was kept by a woman who was a drunkard. It was her drinking that sent her husband to his grave, and it was this

kept the house slovenly from top to bottom, and drove away customers to other places.

In her last months of occupancy an ex-policeman was put in charge of the inn. He often found the woman drunk on the floor of the back room, and

A Country Inn

when she became raving, he would tie her to a beer barrel in the cellar that he might wait on her customers. With the sound of her cursing and shrieking in their ears, the village people had to do their drinking. They thought this a hardship, but they found no lesson in it.

There was hardly a man about Hazelford, rich or poor, but that drank. Nor was it easy to find an exception among the women. Even the laborer, with a large family and a wage of ten shillings a week, who tasted meat but one day in seven, must have his drink and so must his wife.

A man is drawn to the inn as much for companionship and shelter as for any craving for liquor. He might spend his leisure at home, and work in the garden, or sit by the kitchen fire. But he tires of work; and the crowded kitchen, with washing perhaps hung drying about the fireplace, and the squalling children who are likely to be present, is not an attractive place for the man. So he resorts to the inn.

It is a common thing, on almost any occasion where friends meet, for one to say to the other, "Come, Jack, let's 'ave a pint." Then they go to the bar, and Bill asks for a "pint of fours" or a "pint of fives" for each. If he is "a swell chap," he may call for a "pint of sixes," that is, for beer that costs sixpence a quart.

A laborer, who spends an evening at an inn, is seldom content with a single pint. In fact, he feels bound to drink more than that, lest the landlord shall think his custom is not worth his room. Some men make way with seven or eight pints in an evening. Frequently they spend all that is left of their Saturday's wages early in the week, and toward its close have to go dry

— and hungry, too — as like as not. Under such circumstances they live on credit, which is not very great in many cases.

The last of the drinkers, who nightly resorted to the bar-room of the Gray Goose inn, left at ten o'clock, and then the landlord and his wife counted their cash, locked up, and went to bed. It is the law that country inns must close at ten, and this law is strictly enforced. A few minutes before that hour the landlord goes about among such of his patrons, as still loiter, and makes them hurry to drink whatever is left in their cups. On Sundays the bar is open from twelve-thirty to half past two, and from six to ten in the evening.

There was one other lodger at the Gray Goose at the time of my first visit. I ate my meals with him in the stuffy little parlor. He was a middle-aged man named Starkey, who in our conversation was always exceedingly complimentary to the ways and ideas of America. Yet I always had doubts of the sincerity of this adulation, and our relations did not develop much warmth. Mr. Starkey dressed well and, except for a broken nose, was not bad looking. It was understood that in his younger days he had been more or less wild and bad, and this had led to a quarrel with his wife and a separation. But two years ago his wife had died, leaving him six thousand pounds, and the possession of this money had sobered the man.

Laborers hoeing Mangels

Mr. Starkey was always accompanied in his goings and comings by a small yellow dog that was very dismal and scrawny. Mr. Starkey, however, affirmed that this creature was of an uncommonly valuable breed, and that such dogs often sold for seventy or eighty pounds.

The night before I left Hazelford I went out for an evening ramble and was late in getting back. The inn door was locked, though there was still a light in a back room, and I had to rap and rap to get it opened to me. No one knew that I was out, and the innkeeper inquired very suspiciously who was there before he ventured to turn the key.

When I went upstairs, Mr. Rickalls followed me to my room with a lighted candle. He wanted to say something about the other lodger, Mr. Starkey.

"I don't know what to make of he," said my landlord; and he told me he had learned that Starkey was not the well-to-do gentleman he had represented himself to be, but was "one of the biggest blacks in England." He had supposed that he had a lot of property, but had now found out he hadn't anything.

Starkey had been stopping there at Hazelford with a Mr. Copps for some time before he came to the inn to board, and he had borrowed money from this Copps. To make Copps safe, he drew up a will and left all his property to him. This was very satisfac-

tory to Copps until he found that Starkey did not own the property he had willed to him.

Starkey had been arrested lately in London for some rascality, and was only out of jail on bail. One curious

A Village Lane

thing, for a man of his supposed dark character, was that all the time he had stopped in Hazelford he would only take "teetotalers' drinks," that is, ginger-ale, soda-water, and the like.

After Mr. Rickalls had made these shady revelations with regard to my fellow-lodger, I would just as soon have been elsewhere. I had with me a good-

sized sum of money, and I questioned what the "biggest black in England" would be likely to do if he suspected the fact. There was no key to my room door, so I put a chair against it and left my shoes in the road, and then managed to sleep very well in spite of my forebodings.

I had made arrangements to leave the village the next day, and in the early morning I walked to the nearest railroad station. I had supposed that Mr. Starkey was not yet out of bed, but on the road I met him and his ragged little dog. He shook hands with me and wished me good luck on my journey with the greatest cordiality. No one could have been more smooth-spoken or more excessively polite. Yet, underneath the outward polish was something repellent.

Two weeks later I again visited Hazelford. Mr. Starkey was not at the Gray Goose any more. He had left a few days after I did, and the circumstances of his leaving were these. When Saturday night came, Mr. Starkey having been at the inn a week, the landlord brought in his bill. Mr. Starkey found no fault with the amount, for he had explained when he came that he did not care what the expense was if only he was made comfortable. But he said he had no money with him just at the moment and that he would settle the bill in the morning.

Morning came and the money was still lacking. Mr. Rickalls began to get angry and to insist on having his pay, and then Mr. Starkey generously offered to make the landlord safe by handing over to him a "valuable" watch that he carried.

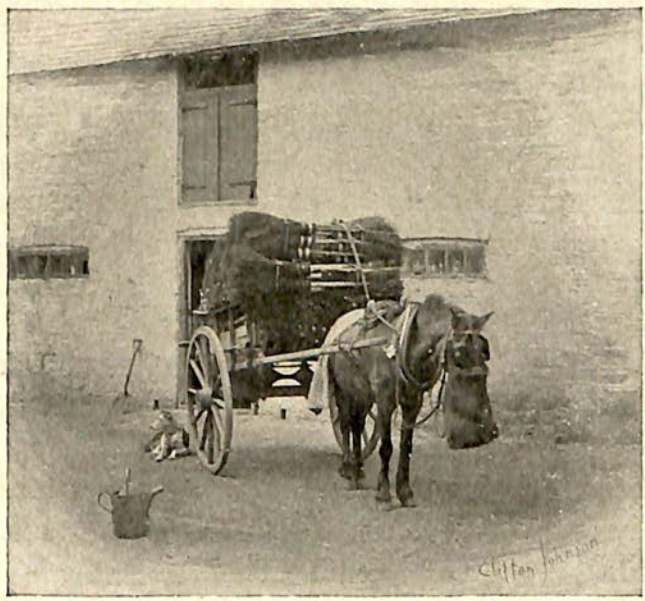
Mr. Rickalls took the watch, and Mr. Starkey and his flea-bitten little dog walked away to find some kindlier quarters.

The landlord carried the watch to Liston a day or two after and had it valued. The jeweller said the works were worthless, and, as for the case, he wouldn't give a sixpence for it.

Another person in whom I took an interest while I boarded at the Gray Goose was a hanger-on of the place, named Sanders. He was a cross-eyed, heavy-jawed young man, always surly, uncomfortable, and muddle-headed with drink. He, like Starkey, had had money left him recently, only in his case the money was fact, not fiction. But no one pretended that this had sobered him, as it was at first believed it had Starkey. Sanders was an idler and a spendthrift to the backbone.

When I made my second visit to Hazelford I stopped off at the railroad station four miles distant and walked out to the village in the dusk of early evening. On the road I was passed by a cart with three men in it, all rather the worse for drink. Some-

thing about the vehicle was out of order, for at every turn of the wheels a violent scraping sound was heard. They drove as if they were going to destruction. One of the three men was Sanders; the others I had not seen before.



Noon in the Inn Yard

The cart and the men were at the inn when I arrived, and there was loud talking and a crowd hanging about. It was plain something unusual was going on. Jack Sanders, it seemed, had swapped a sturdy little white horse he owned for a larger horse that

belonged to a Newstead man. The little white horse was "a piper," that is, broken-winded, but he was tough and steady and "worth sixteen" of the new one. What Jack wanted, however, was a faster animal, and he stoutly maintained that his new horse was "a racer," and he slouched his cap over his cross-eyes and walked about in an even more independent and know-it-all air than usual.

The landlord called the Newstead man "a rogue," and told him he ought to be ashamed of himself to sell a horse like that to a man when he was drunk.

To show that the horse was all right the Newstead man got on it and cantered up and down the road and about the yard; and the temper of the horse and the operations of its half-drunken driver were so uncertain that I thought it best to get behind a pillar of the inn porch.

When the rider got off, one of the horse's front legs was all in a quiver. The Newstead man said there was a wart on it; but the crowd in its asides said something quite different, and I was told that the animal wasn't worth "a quid," and that after Jack had driven it about twice he wouldn't be able to get it into the stable. The Newstead man blustered and treated the crowd at the bar and got the little white horse hitched into its cart and took his things out of the cart that went with the big horse, and then he and the other stranger drove off.

Horse deals of this sort were his chief business, and it was said that he never owned a sound beast in his life.

The new horse was turned loose in the field next the inn, and Jack went in and followed it around and patted it and brought it up before the chaffing crowd that hung over the fence, to show them its good points. He called on the landlord's daughter, the school-teacher, who stood in the doorway, to come out and admire it, but she upbraided him for his foolishness instead.

Jack stepped up to the door to argue the matter, when out came the landlord, who said, "Your wife's in the back room here, now, crying her heart out on account of the way you go on."

Jack found his ardor a good deal dampened by this talk. It made him think he must go home, and he picked up his overcoat, threw it over his arm, and swaggered off across the street.

Jack's father had been one of the best-to-do farmers of the neighborhood. Jack himself was always a ne'er-do-well, and his dissipations began early. For a long time his father allowed Jack two pounds a week, which lasted him till about Wednesday, and when the son contracted debts his father paid them.

Some years ago Jack began to court an inn-keeper's daughter at Liston, "as nice a girl as there was in the region." She knew what a worthless fellow Jack was, and her folks were dead set against the match, but she

would have him. He was not a laborer's son, he was a farmer's son — that was a great merit in the girl's eyes. Unfortunately it was his only one.

But she repented her marriage within a week after they left the church where the ceremony was performed. Jack was a hopeless drunkard, and he often abused his wife shamefully. After his father died they and their two children had nothing to live on, and his wife's mother helped them enough to keep them from suffering. When Jack could earn a little money without working hard, he would, and then, with what he earned, would get drunk. The previous February a relative had left him seven or eight hundred pounds. His wife said they wouldn't have a penny of it by the end of a twelvemonth.

The next morning after the horse trade Jack had sobered enough to feel that his yesterday's business deal was not as brilliant as he thought it at the time, and I saw him ride away presently toward Newstead, with the intention of getting back his little white horse. Jack's wife stood by the street wall across the way from the inn with her hand to her head as if in pain, and watched him out of sight. The night before she had talked to Jack, and he had struck her. There were black-and-blue welts on her arms and on her face.

One of the villagers told me that when it became known in a place that a man was in the habit of beat-

ing his wife, the young fellows got together some evening and gave him a serenade. Tin pans and kettles were chief among the instruments employed. The musicians first made things lively about the man's house, then marched through the streets and back again to the starting-place for a final flourish. They did this serenading for three evenings, and by the end of that time every man, woman, and child in the com-

A Well

munity knew what the trouble was, and the offender, it was to be hoped, had repented and turned over a

new leaf. I understood, however, that interference in such cases was sometimes resented even by the abused party. It was related that a certain villager, who heard a great row going on at his opposite neighbor's, ran across the way and found a man beating his wife. He struck the man and pulled him away when the woman began to abuse her champion and demanded, "And can't a man do what he wants to his own wife?"

Jack Sanders presently returned from Newstead with his little white horse and, after all, he only lost twenty-five shillings by his new trade. The people at the inn were very anxious to quiet him down now and get him away for a little. So was his wife. They were all the more anxious because another horseman was hanging about ready to fasten on to Jack and make another sale. They therefore proposed to me as a person of leisure who wanted to see the country roundabout that I should go for a ride with Sanders that afternoon, and to him that he should take me.

At half-past one Jack had his cart at the inn door, and he and I got in on the front seat. His wife and little girl were to accompany us; but they were slow in getting ready and kept us waiting. This delay put Jack in a great fret, and he had to climb out of the cart and quiet his troubled spirit with a glass of cider. By the time he had put the cider in a safe place the others appeared and clambered up to the rear seat.

I had not had a near view of Mrs. Sanders before. She was apparently of the weak-willed and sentimental sort, but otherwise was good enough.

Mr. Sanders smoked either a pipe or a cigar all through the drive. Most of the time he kept up an uneasy urging on of the horse, which he commonly spoke of as "Mushroom King," though he sometimes added secondary titles like "Star of the Mist" and "Child of the Sunrise." He stopped at every public house on the way for drinks; he said he never could go past a "public."

We went seven miles to an old-fashioned village full of thatched dwellings where Jack had relatives. While he visited them I wandered about by myself. An old lady, weeding a flower-bed in front of her cottage, gave me a friendly bow, and I ventured to stop for a chat. She said that the night before she had dreamed of going to America, and she thought while she dreamed it was a great idea her going way off there at her age; but now she saw what her dream meant — she was to have a visitor from America.

On our way back to Hazelford we saw dozens and dozens of rabbits on the edge of a wood we passed. The sight caused Mr. Sanders to wax very excited, and he swore some and added more mildly, "God bless my soul and body, but I'd have some of those fellows if I had my gun!"

When we neared the end of our journey Mr. Sanders remarked that this had been one of the most eventful days of his life. He said that he would like to come to America, but I did not encourage him in that idea.

I made a friend of the village schoolmaster during my stay at the Gray Goose, and in a letter received from him a year later I learned that Sanders soon ran through his money. Horse-racing and drink made short work of it. During the winter his horse died. He neglected it till it was nearly starved, and then it got down and couldn't get up and had to be shot. He and his wife disagreed and would fight and break furniture and smash windows. It was said that she used the poker on him one day. But neither this nor his poverty cured him of his loafing laziness. He was getting along down hill as fast as he could. He perhaps would never be behind prison bars, but if he missed that he could hardly fail to end his days in the workhouse — that common bourn of the unfortunate and the shiftless.

It may be a question whether the view I got at Hazelford of inn life was wholly characteristic. Some of the incidents were doubtless unusual, but the business from its very nature carries a blight with it, and in every village the inns — because they were the centres of loafing and of drinking — were also the centres of much of the pathos and tragedy of the local life.

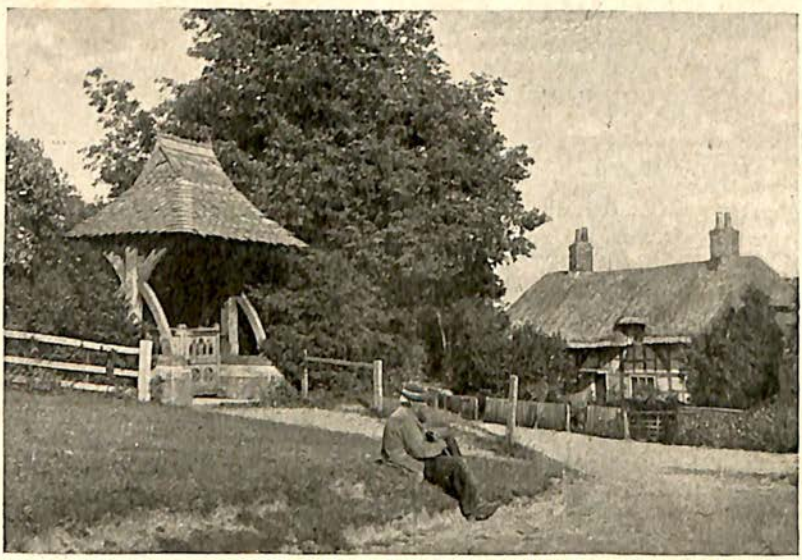
XX

COUNTRY CHURCHES AND CHAPELS

THE adherents of the Church of England far outnumber, in the home country, those of any other religious body, and theirs is the dominant and typical sect in nearly every community. In its character and in its setting the Church of England has many touches of poetry that are absent in the churches of the New World. The building is of stone, and usually is gray and ivy-grown with age. The massive walls have an air of permanence and the charm of antiquity, and the mind unconsciously pictures the coming and going of many generations of worshippers. These sleep now in the churchyard where the grass grows green over the lowly mounds, and the pink-petalled daisies and golden buttercups brighten the turf each summer season.

Among the scattering stones of this village of the dead, gathered about the church walls, are frequent evergreen trees and shrubs, a dark, gnarled yew with a seat under it, and horse-chestnut trees that in spring

are gigantic bouquets of blossoms, musical as a garden of roses with the hum of bees. The churchyards are always tidy and attractive, the grass is mowed frequently, and the gravel paths are kept free from weeds.



The Entrance to a Churchyard

The vicarage adjoins the churchyard, and through the intervening shrubbery you can glimpse its substantial walls and tall chimneys. Usually a vicar is not entirely dependent on the salary of his position, but has some income from bonds or other property of his own.

A vicar, if he is a man of conscience and vigor,

leads an active life. The various services, christenings, weddings, and funerals take time in themselves and in the preparation for them. Besides, he has to give some hours each week to the village school, his social position compels a good deal of visiting, and he, of all others, is appealed to for charity. A great many of the laboring class are on the verge of helplessness, and the vicar has to be constantly investigating the needs of such. It is also held to be his duty to find places for all the girls who want work and to call frequently on the sick and decrepit. Many clergymen give more than the full amount of their salary in local charity.

But not all are faithful. There are those who are lazy or dissipated or tight-fisted. You can hear in English churches some of the most slovenly services imaginable. This, of course, is easily possible where the clergyman gets and holds his position entirely independent of the likes or dislikes of his people. The congregation has no power to depose their pastor, even if he is known to be incompetent, or a hard drinker and of loose morals. A clergyman of this stamp often makes his services surprisingly like a caricature of what they really should be. Yet there is always one redeeming feature, — in the musical part of the services there is never absent a certain refinement and charm.

The houses of worship of the dissenters are always spoken of as "chapels." Dissenters seem not to prosper outside the large towns, and their chapels in country places are usually insignificant and get scanty support. The weakness of the nonconformist folds, and the simplicity and ignorance of their adherents are often pitiful. Their services as I saw them were in many cases harsh, uncultured, and not infrequently grotesque. But, even so, there was an earnestness about the dissenting congregations for which I felt great respect.

I describe in detail a few of the services I attended in English churches and chapels. Some of them are very likely not fair samples, but I was present at many others just as picturesque as any in the list that follows.

Church of England

A sleepy Sunday quiet had brooded over the village all the morning, broken only by the tolling of the church bell at nine o'clock. At half-past ten the chimes began to ring, and they continued to ring intermittently till eleven. Five big bells hung in the church tower, and five ropes dangled down from the bell loft to the floor below. To ring the chimes, five men took off their Sunday coats and pulled away — gently at first, then stronger and stronger, till all the country round echoed with the madly tumbling notes.

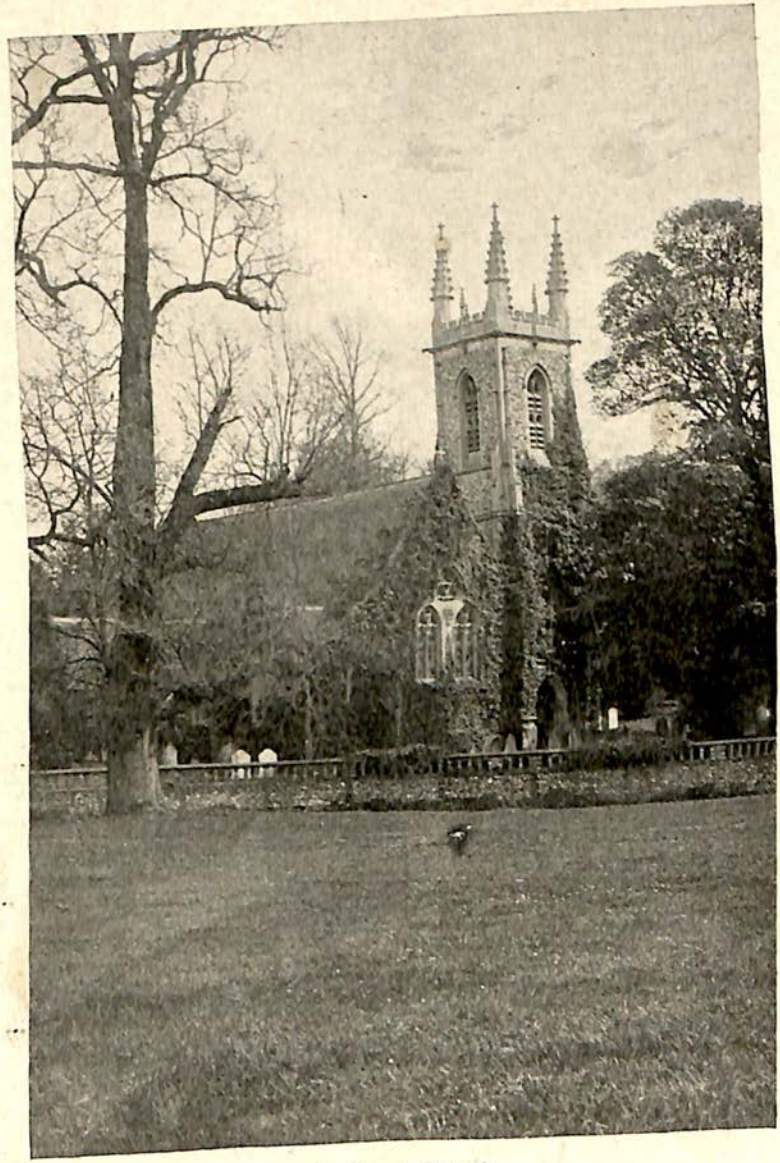
With the ringing of the chimes, village house doors began to open, and little groups of people wended their way churchward. The early comers visited with one another among the graves of the churchyard, or loitered beneath the great yew and about the entrance. Within the arch of the stone porch were hung various posters and notices. One was a schedule of parish expenses, others had to do with her Majesty's army, and one was a list of relatives a person could not lawfully marry. According to this last a man must not marry his grandmother, or his granddaughter, or any one of twenty-eight other female relatives. An equal number of relatives was listed whom a woman must not marry.

Just before the time of service the chimes were rung "in changes," and the worshippers arrived more thickly and flocked into the church. Then a drove of small children — the Sunday-school — came in a double file from the schoolhouse a quarter of a mile away, and went to a set of rising seats next the organ. Immediately afterward the gowned clergyman, with bare head, came through a gate that led from the vicarage. As soon as he entered the chancel service began. It was a formal Episcopal service, largely made up of prayer-book readings and responses, interspersed with chantings by the congregation and the boy choir; and amid all this routine the short, theological sermon preached by the vicar seemed half lost.

At half-past twelve the service came to an end, the chimes were rung again, and the congregation was dismissed. The world without was infused with the noon warmth of the spring sunshine, and its contrast to the chill that lingered among the stone pillars of the shadowy church interior made the change to the open air a very grateful one.

The following Sunday morning I walked out into the country to a church about two miles distant from the village where I attended service the week before. The church in this instance was a lonesome little building in the fields. The congregation came from the scattered farmhouses about and numbered twenty children and twelve grown persons, including the vicar and a woman who played the organ. The vicar was very stout, and he had a fat, vacant face, smoothly shaven, and a bald crown, so that in his surplice he looked like some ancient monk. He seemed tired, and he mumbled in his reading and lisped.

He held his head on one side, and, at the mention of the name of Jesus, and in the more affecting portions of his sermon, cast his eyes upward toward the ceiling and tried to look beatific. One of the double doors of the porch was thrown back, and from where I sat I could see out into the sunshine and hear the birds sing. A mouse came in from this outer world through a hole gnawed in the casing of the door that was



A Rural Church

shut. It apparently did not realize that the other door was wide open, or that anything unusual was going on within. On the mouse came making little runs and pauses until it reached the middle aisle. Then there seemed to dawn on it the consciousness that there were enemies about, and it turned and scampered back to safety. The familiarity of this mouse gave a very interesting touch of characterization to the place, and I could not think of it otherwise than as an ineffective and drowsy little church lost in the fields with nature close around ready to take possession for its own purposes the moment man stepped out.

In one of the villages where I happened to be over Sunday I attended the evening service of a small Baptist congregation at what was known locally as "Harrington's Chapel." Its name was derived from the fact that the meeting place was provided by a Mr. Harrington, a retired farmer of independent property. It was indeed a wing of his house built by him to serve as a public chapel for the adherents of what he esteemed to be the true faith. The interior was simply a good-sized room set full of chairs, with an organ, and a desk covered with a green cloth at the farther end.

Baptist

Mr. Harrington had three sons, and they had taken his place in carrying on the farm. They were all

sympathetic supporters of the father's chapel, and the oldest son was our preacher for the evening. The second oldest stood in the doorway and shook hands with each person who entered. The youngest sat at the organ and led the music. The whole family were emotional, but at the same time were serious and intelligent.

There were perhaps twenty-five persons present when the service began. In its earlier part it was largely singing. Every one enjoyed the music, and all took part, and what they lacked in harmony they made up in heartiness. To give additional emphasis most of the men kept time by thumping the floor with their feet.

The preacher was eloquent in a rude way, and held his hearers' close attention. He did not always use good English, but he had plainly done a deal of original thinking, and his illustrations were numerous and effective. The Bible seemed to be at his tongue's end, and he was constantly referring to passages in it. He preached without notes, but there was no faltering, and he had so much to say that he appeared to find it difficult to stop. Service began at six o'clock, and it was eight before it was finished.

I chanced to sit next old Mr. Harrington and his wife. Both had Bibles while I had none, and Mr. Harrington kindly offered to let me look over with

him. His Bible attracted my attention at once. The book had evidently been read and reread times without number. Its edges were stained black with much handling, and every page was full of marked and underscored words and sentences.

That the Harringtons all felt strongly about religion and were mutually agreed in their beliefs was very plain. When the preacher made a good point they all nodded approval, and Mrs. Harrington smiled with delight and looked around to see if her fellow-hearers were getting the full benefit of her preacher son's unanswerable arguments.

There were others of the audience who were hardly less appreciative than Mrs. Harrington. When the worldly got a hard blow, or when some mistaken belief or shortcoming of professing, yet hypocritical or mistaken, Christians was denounced, nods and nudges were passed around, and the hearts of the little congregation warmed in the consciousness that they possessed the only scriptural and saving faith. The keen thrusts of the preacher were perhaps enjoyed most by two old women up on a front seat. One of them had her head all done up in white bandages, but that did not seem to diminish the pleasure she found in the sermon, nor dampen the ardor with which she and her companion exchanged bobbings of the head and jabs with the elbow.

Among other things the preacher told us we must not reason about what the Bible says — that would get us into trouble. We must accept it without thinking about it. We mustn't take what he said, or what any one else said, for truth — go only to the Bible. What that said was final. You mustn't reason about God's commands. They are often contrary to reason and to common sense. You must obey.

He said with regard to the Lord's Prayer that it was very right and proper for angels to use in heaven, but it should never be used by faulty men on earth. He himself would be a double-dyed hypocrite to use it. In the first place only Christians had the right to use the phrase "Our Father which art in heaven." God wasn't a father to any but Christians. In the second place not a soul would get to heaven if our trespasses were forgiven us as we forgive those who trespass against us. Lastly we should use no prayer in which Christ, the Spirit, and Holy Ghost were unmentioned.

The preacher affirmed that the Bible plainly said that there was but one baptism, and that immersion. He would not say that every one not immersed would go to hell, but he would assert that "they would only get to heaven by the skin of their teeth. Then what does the Bible say you must do on the first day of the week — 'break bread together.' You say you think it is just as well to cut it. But what does the

Bible say? It says, 'break it,' and I prefer to be on the safe side."

The views of this Baptist preacher seemed to me rather peculiar and extreme, yet as I listened to the sermon that evening I found its earnest rustic oratory very interesting and its logic ingenious if not wholly convincing.

Congregational

At half-past two one Sunday afternoon I attended service at a Congregational chapel. The chapel was a plain little granite building just across the road from an inn. The interior was very small and bare. Along each side were three tall, diamond-paned windows. Another window, high up at the farther end of the room, had square panes of yellow glass through which I could see a bit of yellowed woods and sky. Suspended in the open, over the pews, were five cheap lamps. Two more lamps were attached to the little pulpit that stood just under the yellow window. The pews were of unpainted wood, much stained and scratched. None of them had cushions. Near the pulpit was a "harmonium," an instrument we would call a melodeon.

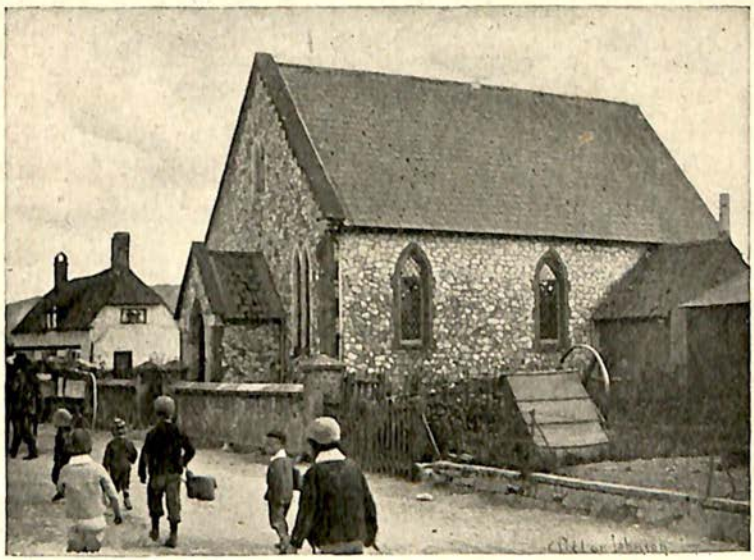
There were present an old lady, a middle-aged lady, a girl, three boys, four spectacled old men, one of whom was the preacher, and a stiff young man who played the little harmonium.

When service began, one of the old men tiptoed over to the old lady and took away her song book and gave it to me. It was a tiny book of hymns, collected by Mr. Sankey — words only. The singing was not very good, but this was the less apparent because the harmonium made such an ear-penetrating noise.

The preacher had his list of hymns on a slip of paper that was something less than an inch square, and he found trouble in reading them straight. He was a seedy-looking man, elderly and gray bearded, yet with dark hair that was parted with great precision through the middle. He did not enter the pulpit, but read and preached from the floor in front of it. When he prayed, he got down on the floor on one knee, and all through the prayer an old gentleman near by on a front seat grunted at frequent intervals approvingly, and once or twice brought forth an audible "Amen," or "Praise God." This same old gentleman offered one of the prayers of the service. In a rude way this prayer, with its earnestness and Biblical phrasing, was quite eloquent.

The preacher was shallow and ignorant, and his chief claim to his position was his gift for speaking without hesitating too long for words. At the same time there was a picturesque vigor about his ideas and expression that made what he said better than the thin-glossed sentences and hair-splitting arguments of

many of the better educated clergy. But his logic was perfectly hopeless, and he was very far from prov-



A Village Chapel

ing what he said he proved. He was uncommonly profuse with his *h*'s and said *h*earth, *h*edify, *h*us, *h*eight, *h*anger, *H*israel, etc. He called maniac, mani*h*ac; neither, nither; statutes, statues. Here are a few fragments from his discourse: —

"Those that was hunfaithful."

"Bartimus, he had 'quired, and he had heard, and light dawned into his soul."

"The world to once lift its voice; and with what hobjec'? It was theirselves made the hobsticle."

"Now what says my tex' about Zaccheus? He got into a tree to see our Lord pass. Methinks it was not only a curiosity desire that made Zaccheus climb that tree. But 'member he was a great sinner — had he a right to get into a sycamore tree? Now the Lord Jesus knowed what was goin' on — he knowed that Zaccheus was up that tree, and he called hunto him, 'Zaccheus, come down,' and he come down. Then the Lord said hunto him he would go with him to his house — not that house over there, not that house up on the hill yonder, not that house over at Halstead — no, this house.

"Before the 'oly Spirit had come down it was different, but we can rejoice, my bretheren, to-day — we can rejoice, my sisters, to-day, that He don't want hus to give nothin' — no, not nothin'."

The preacher did a good deal of roaring and shouting which seemed hardly necessary in so small a place and before so small an audience. In the prayers much stress was laid on the promise that the Lord would be with them even when but two or three were gathered together in his name.

Methodist

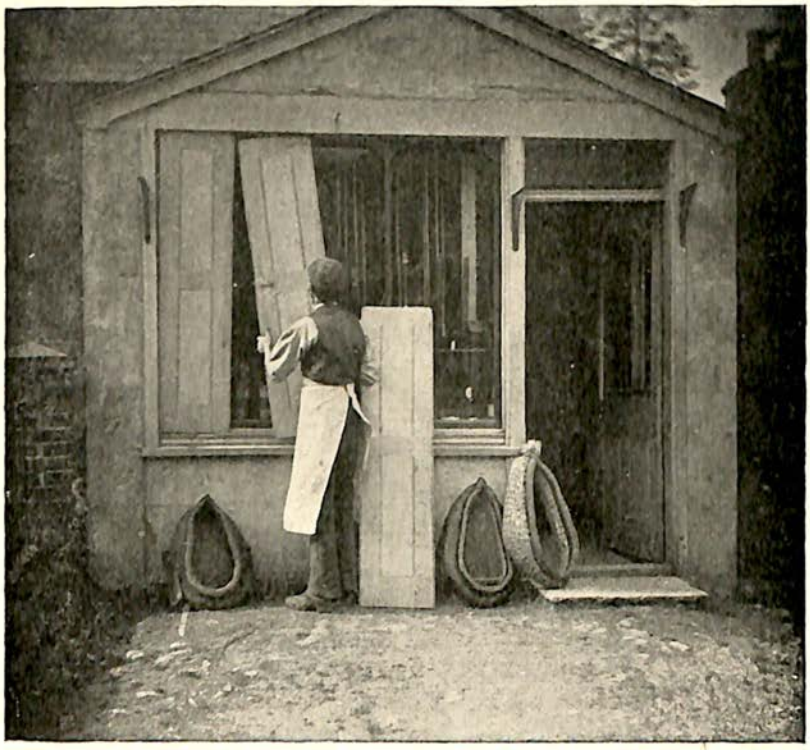
The building was small and exceedingly homely. It was sheathed outside with sheets of crinkly gray iron. Inside it was very bare. Most of the floor space was taken up with rude settees that

would perhaps seat one hundred people. At the farther end was a pulpit draped along the front with red cloth. Above the pulpit were two lamps hung against the wall, one at each end of a motto "God bless our school."

I attended evening service at the chapel. When I came in, a young man sat at the harmonium in front of the pulpit trying to finger out "The Sweet By and By" with one hand. Either he was clumsy, or the instrument was out of order, for the result was pretty dismal. Near the back of the room was a stove-like grate with a pipe running up from it and out at the side of the building. Just in front of the glowing blaze in the grate sat a settee full of boys, five in all. A weather-beaten and bony old man occupied the seat back of the stove, and there were several other people scattered about the room.

Presently the young man at the harmonium shut up the instrument and mounted the pulpit. He said, "We will begin by singing the eighty-eighth hymn. Will some one in the audience please start the tune?" We all rose, but no one volunteered to sing, and there was an awkward pause. While we were waiting, the door opened and in bustled a fresh-looking young woman. She came up the aisle, stepped to the side of one of the women, who shared her hymn-book with the newcomer, and then the girl at once started the tune. The rest

promptly pitched in, and we produced a lot of noise—it could not be called harmony; yet perhaps what it lacked in quality was made up in quantity. I do not know why it was, but the non-conformists seemed to



Putting up the Shutters on Saturday Night

have much louder voices in their worship than the Church of England people.

The sermon was bombastic and commonplace. Lack

of culture and education in the preacher were very apparent. His ordinary week-day occupation was that of grocer, and there were those who said that his Sunday labor at the chapel was undertaken because he liked to hear his own oratory, and because it drew trade to his grocer's shop. The point that he made particularly emphatic in his discourse this evening was the insufficiency of a "theorétical knowledge of Christ," a phrase that he repeated again and again. He talked about the "devil" and "damnation" and "eternal burning" with confidence and certainty. Incidentally he spoke of a time when the angels "blasted their trumpets." He brought in a good deal of personal religious reminiscence, and among other things told us that at the period when he became a Christian there was a whole week when he could neither eat nor sleep, and he well remembered how the voice of God came to him and said, "Rise, son, thy sins are forgiven thee."

At the close of the sermon the preacher came down out of the pulpit, and he and the young woman with the red cheeks sang a duet. After that an elderly brother up in front kneeled on the floor with his elbows in a chair and made a prayer which was interrupted at intervals by the preacher with low-voiced responses such as "Praise God!" "That's so!" "Yes!" "No!" "Amen!" and occasionally ecstatic "A-a-hs!" Then the girl with the red cheeks prayed emotionally, and the

preacher called on those present who had found Christ to raise their hands. He said he saw that some hands were not up, and urged that "now was the appointed time," and asked any who might be in doubt to come forward, and after more urging and singing he gave it up, and the meeting was closed, and the congregation, eighteen, all told, turned toward the door.

A woman had lent me a hymn-book, and now when I returned it she reached out for my hand, shook it, and said warmly, "God bless you, sir."

XXI

TWO ENGLISH SUNDAY-SCHOOLS

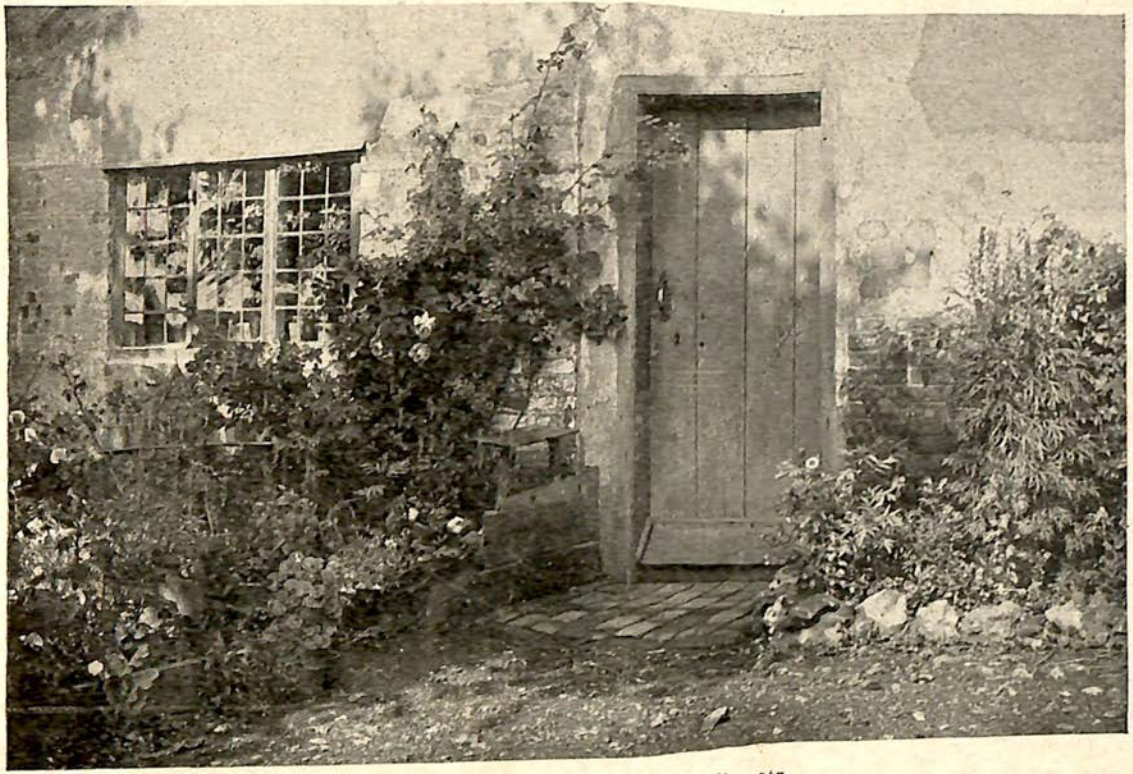
THEY were both in country villages of southern England. One was a "church" Sunday-school, the other a "chapel" Sunday-school. As is usual in country communities, the church Sunday-school met in the village schoolhouse. Ten o'clock in the morning was its meeting time. It was a Sunday in May that I attended, but the day was almost wintry with its keen wind and dull clouds. About thirty-five children were present, seated in class groups on the antiquated wooden benches of the queer old schoolroom. There was a class of the older boys, a class of the older girls, a class of younger children, and a class of infants. The last was without a teacher, but the largest infant—a small girl—was making the others repeat some passages of Scripture and read something out of an old book of Bible pictures. The other classes were taught by two elderly ladies and by another woman who was more youthful.

The vicar's wife had charge of the school. She was at "the top" of the room with a class of girls. She

was a thin, peaked-faced person in a heavy cloak and woollen gloves. She wore little gold rings in her ears, and had heavy silver bracelets on her wrists that kept coming unfastened. She was a serious person, and leaned forward with her elbows on her knees when she asked questions.

She had her class repeat from memory parts of the English Church service, and then asked the scholars questions from a lesson-book that she told me was "a very good one." This lesson-book, which she let me look at, was full of stupid Biblical and theological questions of a character calculated to make one's head spin if one tried to think them out. But the scholars of this class would knit their brows and bite their lips and roll their eyeballs toward the ceiling, and give to the most puzzling questions answers that their teacher accepted as right. When they could not answer off hand, the teacher had them look up a solution by references in their Bibles. That did away with the necessity for an answer of their own, and when they found the right passages they simply read them in childish sing-song.

The boys' class, at the "bottom" of the room, was taught by a stout lady of the smiling and "enthused" sort. The older mixed class had a young woman in charge, who was of the faithful, mild, and emotional type.



The Cottage Doorway and its Adjuncts

The teacherless infants presently became sick of their Bible pictures and got a volume of "Chatterbox" from somewhere to look through. Some of the infants stood up and talked aloud, and one small girl walked out in the middle of the floor and put her finger in her mouth and looked around. But her next older sister, two inches taller, in the class above, saw her and was much shocked by her behavior. She stepped out and grabbed the child and sat her down hard on the backless bench by her side in the young woman's class. Infant junior's hat was tilted backward, and infant senior pulled it square and took out her handkerchief and wiped infant junior's nose. Then the two looked at the teacher and began to consider "What types of Christ's justification are to be found in the Old Testament?"

The vicar's wife in addition to teaching her class of girls tried to keep the infants crowding about the "Chatterbox" in order by turning on them sharply every now and then, and saying, "Sh-h-h-h!" or, "Sit down, sit down!" or, "Stop that noise!"

After a time the school broke up, and in two or three irregular flocks, wandered along the lane that led churchward. I followed after, and thus chanced to see a little girl who was going in the opposite direction do obeisance to the gentry by dropping a courtesy to the vicar's wife. The performance was rather odd and pretty.

This Sunday-school was probably not up to the average. I think, however, that even at its best, the

On the Way to Sunday-school by a Field Path

English Sunday-school is drier and more formal, and that it has less variety, than in America. The usual plan of the English Church Sunday-school is this: It meets at ten in the morning at the schoolhouse. First, the children recite the "collect" for the day, which they are supposed to have learned. Then they read passages from the Bible, and the teachers talk about what their scholars read, and explain it. Some Sunday-schools use question books. The only music is the singing of a hymn. At a quarter of eleven the children form

in a double column and march from the schoolhouse to the church, where they all sit together in a place assigned to them. At this village the children had the rear pews, and they did a good deal of visiting with one another during service.

The other Sunday-school that I attended was at a small Congregational "chapel." I approached the place of meeting at a little before eleven one Sunday morning. I had supposed there would be a service at that hour, just as there was at the village "church." But there were no people moving in the chapel direction and no loiterers around the entrance. I went in. Several pews about the tiny stove at one side of the room were occupied by a group of children, and before them sat a spectacled old man. It had all the marks of being a Sunday-school class and its teacher, and I saw that I had made a mistake and that the chapel did not have a morning service.

As soon as I had opened the door every eye was fastened on me, and the whole crowd was struck dumb with astonishment. They probably had never had a visitor before. I sank into a seat, but they looked and looked, teacher and all, till I broke the spell by saying "Good morning!"

"Good morning!" the teacher responded. Then he read a few sentences from the book he had in his

hand, thought better of it, and stepped around to ask if I wouldn't come up in front and address the children. I begged off, and the teacher returned to his task. He was lame, and he had a red nose. He was reading a story out of a little square Sunday-school book. The tale was about a man who held a meeting in some rough city neighborhood, and of a ragamuffin hearer who got converted. The teacher read the story in as unearthly a voice as I have ever heard — something as a minister who is oratorical reads the Bible. He had the most rolling and solemn of religious tones, and kept these tones up through descriptions, conversations, slang, and all. The only times he was natural were when the members of the class grew too uneasy. Then he would stop in the middle of a sentence and say sharply, "Eddie, you sit down! We'll 'ave you hout 'ere by me presently."

Eddie was the most fidgety boy in the class. Finally the teacher got out of patience with him, and when the youngster was hanging over the pew in front of where he was supposed to sit, the old gentleman stole up to him softly and gave him a box on the ear.

Occasionally the teacher stopped to point a moral in the tale; but these morals were uniformly dismal and theological and way outside the children's comprehension — and any one's else, for that matter.

There were present sixteen scholars, from four to

thirteen years of age. Of these three or four appeared bright and were well dressed; the rest were stupid and homely and rather shabby in clothing. They had that uneasy and constant tendency to twist that you find in children everywhere; but considering what they had to bear, they behaved very well.

A Stile

After the teacher had read a couple of chapters from the story book, the school rose and sang a hymn. It went rather shakily and doubtfully. Then Bibles were distributed, and a chapter was read from one of Paul's Epistles. The six scholars who were able to read each took a verse in turn. The teacher read extracts from other parts of the Scriptures, and made occasional applications and explanations.

The Bibles had shiny black oilcloth covers, and some of the boys amused themselves by blowing their warm breath on them, which made a mist on the

oilcloth surface, and on that they drew figures and pictures.

Sunday-school closed with a prayer by the teacher. The children, in this, all got up on their knees on the seats and leaned over the backs of the pews. After the prayer all got cheerful, packed up the Bibles in a box, slid the box under a seat, and went out into the street.

XXII

IN THE LAND OF LORNA DOONE

EARLY in June I made a coaching trip along the coast of north Devon. It is a lonely region of great hills and deep valleys, and the railroad goes no further than Minehead in Somersetshire. Minehead is a dull town ordinarily, but during the tourist season, at train time, the scene about the station, with its gathering of cabs, coaches, and other conveyances, is a busy and animated one. The most imposing of the vehicles backed up to the station platform on the day I reached Minehead was a four-horse coach that had the name "Lorna Doone" painted in large letters on its rear. It was in charge of an aristocratic looking driver, in buff uniform, with a less elaborate footman for assistant.

My traps, along with a lot of others, were hustled inside the Lorna Doone, and a mountainous pile of larger luggage was heaped up and strapped on top just behind the driver. Next a ladder was set against the side of the coach, and the passengers climbed to

their places. Then the driver picked up his reins, and away we went. The footman was the last on board. He caught on nonchalantly at the moment of starting, swung up to the rear seat, and blew an enlivening strain on his long horn. This music he repeated at intervals as we rattled through the Minehead streets.

A ride on the outside of a big coach has a touch of romance and power about it that thrills and inspires one. We looked down on everything and everybody. All the teams on the road gave way to us. When we sighted a vehicle on ahead, no matter which way it was going, the footman played one of his little tunes on the long horn, and the humbler conveyance drew off by the roadside while we dashed past.

Our first few miles lay through rich farm lowlands, but when we reached Porlock the driver said we had a bit of steep road ahead and asked the men on the coach to walk. The ascent proved to be a three-mile hill with an altitude of fourteen hundred feet. The country on the way up turned to a barren heath of rolling hills that swept away southward as far as the eye could reach. This heathery highland waste is Exmoor Forest, the only region in England where the red deer is still found in its wild state, and the forest is famous hunting ground. Hundreds of horsemen gather at the stag meets every year.

June Roses

The wind blew a hurricane on this hilltop, and we were all glad when, a little farther on, we sighted a group of farm buildings where the driver said we would

stop to change horses. We drew up in the lee of a stone barn, and an old lady from the house brought out tea and a platter of buttered bread, and the passengers had these refreshments passed up to them, and sipped and munched as they sat on the coach-top.

The rest of the journey was nearly all down hill, and much of the way we slipped along with a clog under a rear wheel. At one point the driver called attention to a distant depression in the heath where a momentary gleam of sunshine from the clouded sky touched with emerald a fragment of woodland, and said there lay the Doone Valley. It was far inland, and that was the only glimpse we had of it that day. The coach was bound for Lynmouth and Lynton, two villages on the coast, and in the last few miles we looked down on a white-capped sea with a few little vessels struggling along on it, while, far across its level, in the west, the sun glared through the rifts in the clouds.

The coast was wild and high-cliffed, with many bold headlands reaching out from the mainland, and our road skirted a steep hillside that fell away almost from the wheel track, in a tremendous precipice to the surf of the shore deep down below. On the heather heights we had crossed I had been afraid the top-heavy coach would be tipped over by the wind; now I feared it would get dumped down the hillside by a jolt of the wheels, or by a swing around a turn in the road. At

last, Lynmouth was close ahead, and we slid down into the slippery shadows of the trees in a narrow valley, crossed the stone arch of a bridge, and entered the village. The horn tooted briskly, the coach stopped, and the passengers began to climb down the ladders and at once were surrounded by numerous porters soliciting them to come to their various hotels. After the luggage had been tumbled off, an extra horse was hitched on, and the coach climbed a steep zigzag up a great cliff to Lynton, high above.

Lynton and Lynmouth are twin villages. Each is a snug hamlet of lodging-houses and hotels, and they are so near together that you could throw a stone from Lynton's high perch down on the roofs of the sister village in the ravine. I stopped in Lynmouth. The deep, green dell with its huddle of houses taking up every inch of available space, the great hills towering about and the streams that come rioting down from the heights, is very charming.

The next morning was dull and misty; but here I was right on the edge of the country that Blackmore has made so romantically interesting, and, in spite of the threatening weather, I started on a walk to seek for the heart of this region of enchantment, the valley where dwelt the old robber band of Doones. This lay something like a dozen miles back from the coast, and the route to it led much of the way up a vast

crooked glen. A stream roared and foamed in the deep, wooded ravine, and big stony mountains towered on either side.

There were sheep in many of the fields all along the road from Lynmouth up. They were picking about even on the most rocky mountain sides. Often I saw them in the highway, but at my approach they would leap nimbly away, up the hillside or down, whichever was most convenient. The sheep were of a horned variety, and in their alert vigor and look of intelligence were very attractive.

In time I came to a little hamlet of whitewashed cottages, and noticed with interest that each cottage had a pile of peat near it. The piles were at this season much reduced, but I saw one that was still about ten feet high and eight square, with a bit of thatch on top to protect it from the weather. I regarded the peat with a good deal of curiosity, for it was the first I had seen.

The day had been misty from early morning, but now the mist turned to rain, and I stepped in at an open village door for shelter. I was welcomed by a frowzy woman with a baby in her arms. She invited me to sit in the kitchen, but I preferred to stand in the little entry and look out on the rain, and leave that apartment to the occupants already in it. These were a hen and chickens picking about its grimy floor,

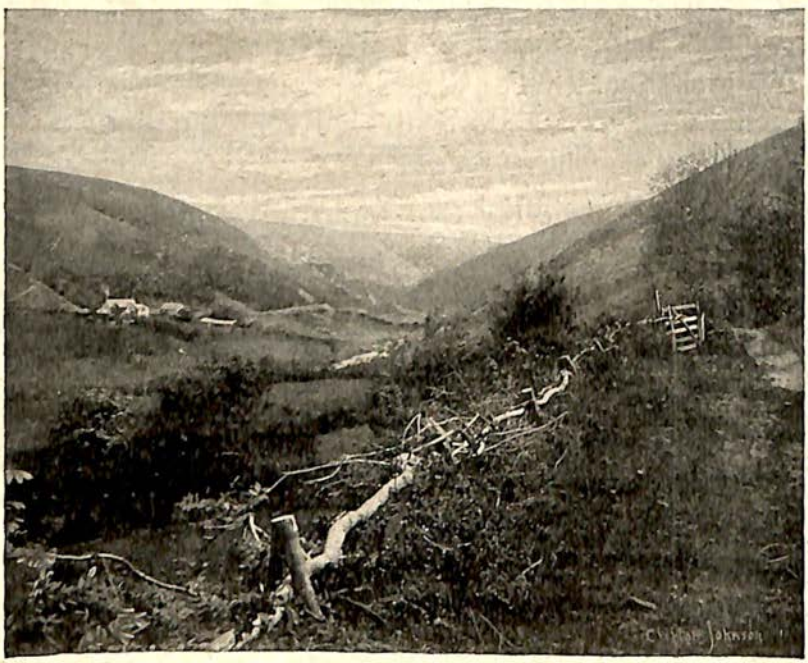
and several children who were quarrelling in the uneasy way usual with children when they have nothing with which to occupy themselves. Two of the boys were declaring stoutly that they were going to church that evening (it was Sunday), and a sister was harassing them by snapping out over and over again, "You bean't, you bean't." The mother had to threaten to "lick the whole lot," before they would desist from their religious controversy.

The sky lightened up after a time, and I continued on up the valley. Eight miles from Lynmouth I reached Malmsmead, a group of two or three small farmhouses, which lies directly at the entrance to the Doone Valley. The main highway continues straight on, and those who choose to visit the stronghold of the Doones have to take a side road which soon dwindles to a lane, and the lane, a little farther on, becomes a rude bridle-path. It is customary for ladies to make the tour from Malmsmead up the Doone Valley on horseback. The choice lies between that and going on foot, and, as the round trip is six miles, pony-back travellers are common in the glen.

The valley opens southward back into a high wide sweep of the hills. The slopes were sometimes partly wooded, but in the main were of bare, dull, olive-brown heather. In the hollow was "Badgeworthy Stream" fretting along its stony course. Many groups of sheep

were feeding on the barren pastureland, which, soon after I passed Malmsmead, became one great unfenced expanse of heath called "The Common." All the farmers around had sheep grazing on it.

Lovers of Mr. Blackmoore's book will be disappointed if they expect nature in this region to be what he pictures it in "Lorna Doone." Nature gave him hints, and his imagination did the rest. There is no wild, inaccessible glen with a precipice-guarded portal. At the spot where the entrance to the Doone strong-

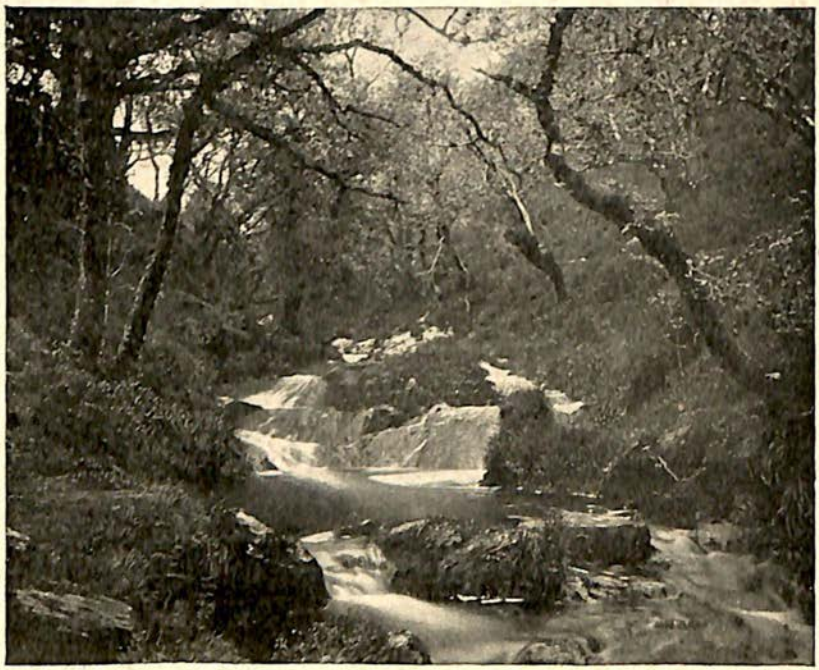


Doone Valley

hold should be, Badgeworthy Stream is joined by a modest trout-brook that tumbles down a rocky hollow through a little wood of scrubby oak whose branches are strangely twisted and mossy. The stream, as it comes through the wood, is a succession of pools, and of slides down green, mossed terraces of rock. In the book, the boy John Ridd nearly loses his life climbing up these slippery slides. But here in real nature there is nothing that need have kept him from picking his way along the banks, though there are occasional shoulders and ledges of rock that push out from the hill. At a certain point I crept under one of the ledges to get out of the rain and the drip of the trees. There was nothing "jagged, black, and terrible" about it or any of the other ledges. Yet in a way the spot was very satisfactory. The germ of it all was there, and trees and rocks and banks had a moss-grown, lichened look of age full of mysterious suggestion. It was delightful to sit there and think of the little fellow struggling up the terraced slides of the stream, and of that first meeting with Lorna.

I went a mile up the lonely valley, beyond the waterslide, and, on this whole, hilly, watersoaked heath saw not even a sheep. I kept on till I came to the end of the ravine where can still be discerned a few low, grass-grown ruins of walls that were once the Doone huts. Here, towards the close of the seven-

teenth century, lived this old band of outlaws and levied blackmail on the country round. Traditions



John Ridd's Waterslide

of their terrible strength and cruelty still linger in the neighborhood. In the end a particularly fiendish act of theirs roused the country to exterminate "the entire nest of vipers."

Toward evening I tramped back through mists and mud to Lynmouth; but the next morning I went again to linger about the little valley where the

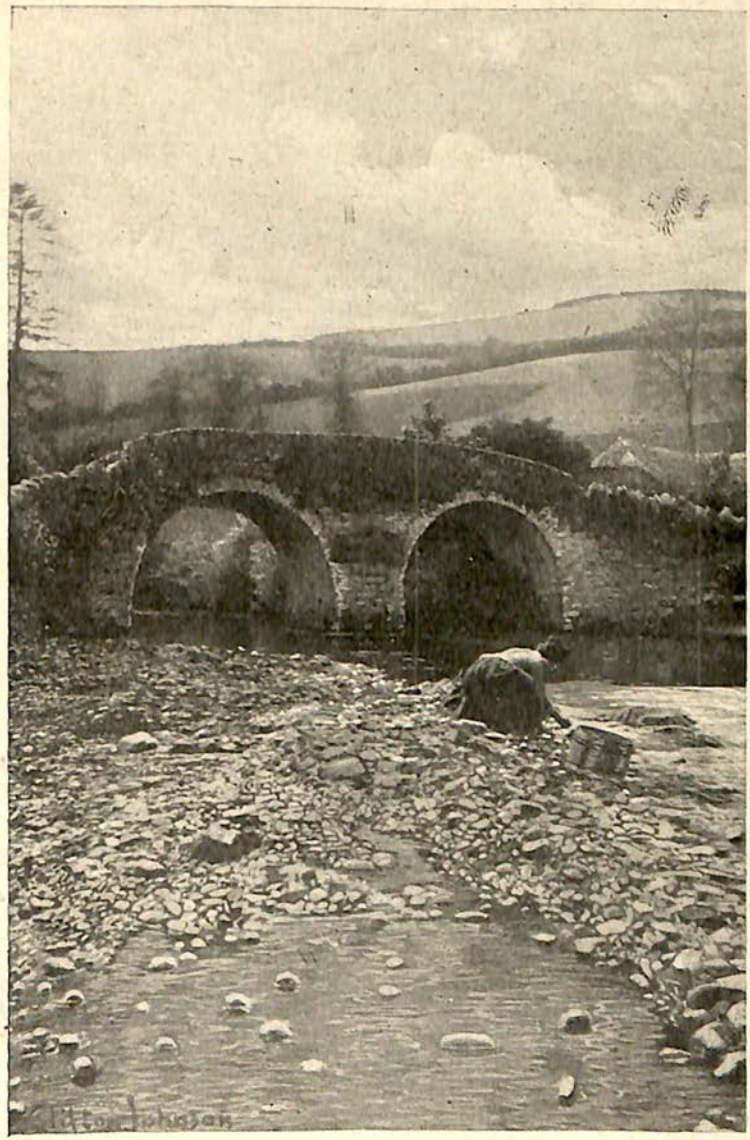
Doones had made their home. The day was bright and gentle, and the hours slipped swiftly past. It was nearly sunset when I returned to Malmsmead. The afternoon was so far spent that I did not care to walk back to Lynmouth, and I looked about the tiny hamlet to discover what chances there were to get a night's lodging. A little river coursed through the hollow among the houses, and just below a pretty, double-arched stone bridge that the road climbed over as if it had been a little hill, was a woman kneeling on the stones by the streamside, washing. The sight was so picturesque that I drew nearer, but it took the edge off the charm when the woman explained that there had been a pig-killing at one of the farms, and that she was "washing out the insides" of the late pig. She said her daughter was coming down soon to help carry up the tub. I had not made the acquaintance of the woman for the purpose of discussing her employment, but to arrange, if possible, to get a stopping-place for the night. The result of our negotiations was favorable, and when the daughter came to help carry home the tub, I followed the pair to the kitchen of a thatched farmhouse near by.

The most notable piece of furniture in this thick-walled, tile-floored kitchen was a heavy plank table that ran nearly the full length of one side of the room. Behind the table was a long seat fastened against the

wall, and on the other side a ten-foot bench of home manufacture, with great wide-spreading legs at each end. I sat on this bench and talked with the various members of the household, while two small, red-headed girls, who could just manage to get their elbows on the table, seated themselves opposite and kept a silent watch of me.

The children of this Malmsmead home numbered seven, and were all girls — a fact not to be regarded with equanimity, for girls have but a poor time of it in this region. They rarely can make their way in the world very effectively, and as their outdoor usefulness is limited, they are not thought to be of much account, particularly if they are in the majority. These girls did a good deal of boys' work, such as cow-driving and odd jobs. Three of them walked every day to a school four miles distant. They might have attended a school two miles nearer, but the latter was not kept by a master — only by a woman — and the parents were of the opinion that a woman did not get her scholars along as a man would.

For breakfast the next morning the smaller children had simply bread crumbed in hot milk. The others of the family fared on bacon, fried potatoes, bread and butter, and tea, while for my especial benefit there was added boiled eggs, jam, and Devonshire cream. This final item is a famous delicacy in England, and it is



The Bridge at the Entrance to Doone Valley

so very good it seems a pity we do not have it in America.

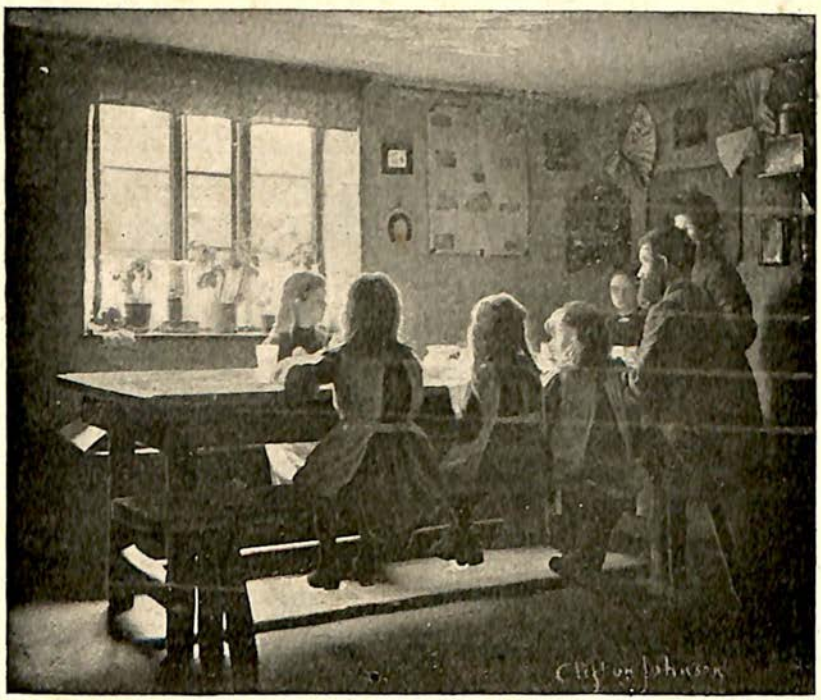
The process of making Devonshire cream as I saw it in this farmhouse was as follows: First the woman of the house, when she finished milking, strained the milk into some great earthen pans. In them it stood till the following morning. Then she put the pans on the fire and let the milk scald. After that the pans were set away again, and at the end of another twenty-four hours were skimmed. The result was Devonshire cream, and no one who has ever tasted it can forget its dainty sweetness. It is eaten as a relish with bread, usually accompanied by jam or marmalade.

This farm had no well, and most of the water for house use was brought from the near stream. Water for drinking and special purposes had to be conveyed from a spring quite a little walk below in the meadows, a task that usually fell to the oldest girl.

The kitchen was without a sink, as were most farm kitchens of that neighborhood. When the dishwashing was being done, the pan of water was set on the bench by the table and the dishes were drained on the table itself. Slops were turned into a big wooden pail or a piggin, to be thrown out into the yard when it became convenient or necessary.

My landlady after breakfast did her churning. She brought out a good-sized wooden tub, set it on the

bench by the table, turned in a great bowl of cream, rolled up her sleeves, and did the churning by stirring the cream around with her hand. The butter soon came at that season, but in frosty winter weather it might be a two hours' job, and by the time the cream



A Devon Farm Family

had been stirred to butter the woman had rubbed her knuckles sore and her arm was "ready to drop off."

Most of the year she churned every other day, but

in summer, when the cream was liable to sour, she churned every day. Later in the week she would take the butter to a town ten miles distant to market.

The family kept two sheep dogs. Such dogs are not taxed in England. On "fancy" dogs there is a rate of "seven and sixpence," but collies are workers — necessary members of society. Sheep are kept out in the pastures all the year through, but in winter they have to be fed some with hay and oats or turnips. If any of the sheep are missing after a storm, the shepherds go out and poke around with their sticks in the spots where the snow is deep, and when they find the sheep dig them out with shovels. Usually the unfortunates are discovered under the shelter of a hedge where they had gone for protection and had been drifted over. On Exmoor Forest when a snow-storm threatens the shepherds drive the sheep to the hilltops where the snow will blow off. It is the drifts that are dangerous.

Mowing in these Devon valleys is all done by hand. The mowers start their work about three or four o'clock in the morning. By ten the dew is dried off, and they stop mowing, spread their swaths and attend to the hay cut the day before. Toward six o'clock in the afternoon the men begin mowing again, and keep at it till ten, or in good weather sometimes till after midnight. The partly dried hay that is to be left out over night

is raked up in little "rackrolls," or, if it looks rainy, is stacked in "pooks."

A farm laborer's daily wage in this district is two shillings and his "mate" (the Devon word for food). In the long summer days a man can earn a half crown or three shillings and "mate."

Toward noon I started down the valley and left Malmsmead and the Doone country behind, but not the memory of them. In its story interest, in its picturesque scenery, and in the glimpses of life I caught among its people, I nowhere in England found a region more enjoyable.

XXIII

THE HOME OF KING ARTHUR

WHEN I left the Doone country I continued along the Devon coast in the same sort of great four-horse coach that I had ridden on in the journey from Minehead. We left Lynton in the late afternoon. Passengers were few, and the guard had the back of the coach to himself. That gave him elbow room, and he enlivened all the way with the music of his long horn. He gave a warning every time we approached a turn in the road, he tooted when we were to meet or overtake a team or about to enter a village, he sounded various notes in two valleys which sent back echoes, he blew to frighten the rabbits we saw feeding in the fields, and he made a hoarse bellowing noise on the horn as a salute to some cattle feeding in a pasture, whereat they grew very frisky and came galloping after us till the roadside hedge brought them to a stand. It was a cold, clouded drive, and we were all thankful when, late in the evening, we arrived at Ilfracombe, where we were to spend the night.

Those of us who wished to go farther down the coast left on an early train the next day for Bideford, and there, toward noon, we took a coach that carried us to Clovelly. The Clovelly coach had seventeen passengers on its top, besides the driver and the guard; and there was an old sailor with his personal effects tied up in a red pocket-handkerchief who clung to the step behind. The old sailor might have ridden inside the coach had it not been that the space there was crammed full of baggage.

In one village we went through there was to be a wedding that day, and many lines full of flags were hung at intervals across the roadway; and, at the entrance to the grounds of the bride's home was an arch of evergreens and flowers with a great red paper poster that said, "God bless the bride and bridegroom." It was a marriage among the gentry and was made a holiday for the neighborhood. There would be great feasting and drinking up at the big house, no doubt, later, for the benefit of the villagers.

About one o'clock we passed a schoolhouse, and a good share of the scholars began to yell and run after us and cling to the coach behind. I think some of them followed us a mile. The man sitting next me was much interested, and said it was a great thing to have young ones about — they kept you amused —

A Blind Beggar and his Companion

and he got out a penny and tossed it to a little fellow whom he said was "a proper boy." But a sharp-faced little girl was too quick for the proper boy and grabbed the penny first.

The man who furnished the penny said he was travelling for his health, and that he had been down in middle Devon. "They are the most ignorant people there I ever saw," said he. "I couldn't stand it. I had to come away. They called everything 'he' except an old tomcat, and that they call a 'she.'"

When we neared Clovelly, the driver pulled in his horses and informed us that we had now reached the famous "Hobby Drive" and that any who chose could walk down it.

I was one of those who chose, and I paid fourpence to the gateman and started on to get my money's worth. This drive was built by a rich woman of the neighborhood, who took a fancy to the idea and made it her hobby. It was simply a roadway cut in the steep hillsides that looked out on the sea and it ran around all the ridges and back into all the ravines, and all the way was through a rather uninteresting wood. A two-mile-and-a-half walk brought me to the end of this sort of thing, and to the steep cobbled descent that led to Clovelly.

I engaged lodging in an old house that had stairways in it more twisted and narrow and liable to rap

Clovelly

one's head, than any I had ever seen, and was shown to a bare little bedroom well up under the roof. The house stood high up a steep ravine and when I looked out I saw many roofs and chimneys descending in

irregular terraces to the sea, where some little fishing-boats were beating about the bay. Far off were foggy headlands and the dim horizon line of the ocean.

I fancy Clovelly is as queer a place as is to be met with in Britain. Its houses are nearly all old, with whitewashed walls for the prevailing fashion in exteriors. I do not think the place could be said to have streets. There is one chief highway that goes by a crooked, uncertain route down the lowest part of the hollow in which the hamlet is built, and there are various side ways, but the latter are hardly more than paths that lead to houses. The narrow main thoroughfare is rudely cobbled, and in its steeper parts is laid out in long, rough steps. You never see carts or horses on it. The tradesmen deliver their goods in baskets, and luggage is brought down the hill by hand or on "slides." A slide is a sort of framework sled with long wooden handles projecting from the front like shafts. A man gets hold of these handles and drags things down over the cobbles by main force.

A good deal of the village carrying is done by donkeys with panniers strapped on their backs. They look very sober and patient and hard-working. It is the donkeys that convey the tourists' trunks and boxes up to the place on the road above where the coach starts. A sort of wooden staging is put on each animal's back and then the luggage is piled so high that one would

think, if the donkey were on unpaved ground, the weight would sink its slender legs into the earth up to its body.

Down at the shore is a little stone quay that hooks out into the water and casts a protecting arm around the fishing craft anchored within its shelter. Near by on a bench, under the walls of an old inn, a group of ancient sailors was always sitting every time I visited that vicinity, and they looked as if they did nothing else the year through.

I would as soon live in a house whose rooms were all stairways, as in a village like Clovelly, where you never can go anywhere without climbing or descending a steep hill. It was a sight to see an old lady come down the cobbled street on a donkey one morning. There was an old sailor to lead the donkey, and two other men, one on each side, to bolster the rider and see that she did not tumble off. The donkey was the most self-contained of the group, though he looked badly off with such a load.

I left Clovelly at five one afternoon for an eighteen-mile ride to Bude. The sky had begun to cloud, and the weather soon grew very gloomy and windy and cold. Our journey was much of the way across sweeping upland hills. In the early dusk we stopped to change horses and get lunch at a lonesome little stone dwelling on a hilltop. The coach passengers crowded

into the kitchen, which was bright as could be, with its gay display of colored crockery and ornaments, its brisk fire in the grate, and its table spread with a lunch for us travellers. The bread and butter and the clotted cream and jam were delightful. There were cakes and cookies, besides, and tea or milk to drink — and the charge was only sixpence apiece.

After a night at Bude we went on by coach again,

A Village in Cornwall

and in the early afternoon arrived at Tintagel, a treeless village of gray stone houses on the shoulder of a

great bare hill, with other bare hills, cut into many little fields by walls and hedges, rolling up roundabout. The notable attraction that the place possesses lies in the fact that here was born the great King Arthur, here was his home, and here his chief fighting-ground. Not far distant on the cliffs of the wild coast stood his castle where gathered the knights of the famous Round-table. Up the road two or three miles from Tintagel is a great slab of stone with a weight of several tons, close by the wheel-tracks, that is known as King Arthur's Kite. The story is that King Arthur flew the stone over in the form of a kite from Ireland; but lest I should believe this myth, the old man who trimmed the grass in the yard of my hotel warned me that the story was all "bosh."

As soon as I had secured a room at the "King Arthur's Arms" I started to hunt up King Arthur's castle. I left the town behind and went down a great, crooked valley walled in by steep, rugged pasture hills. At the end of this valley, near the sea, was a small cottage with a sign on it that said, "Get the key to the castle here — Photographs for sale — Temperance drinks." I went in on a venture and invested in a temperance drink and looked at the photographs. Then the old lady and the middle-aged lady in charge brought out the key to the castle and told me just how to put it in the lock up at the castle gate and

turn it, and how I could let in ladies, but no men, and must take the key out and lock the door after me when I went in and carry the key around in my pocket.

The path to the castle led around a cliff and across a narrow peninsula and then zigzagged roughly up the face of a great precipice. At the top of the ascent were some ancient, weather-worn stone walls, turretted and loopholed, and right in front of me was an arched entrance blocked by an oaken door. My key let me through this door, and I found myself in a grassy field inclosed by low crumbling walls. Across a chasm, on the mainland, were other remnants of walls that have been separated from the rest by landslides, caused by the undermining action of the waves. Other ruins were scattered about the peninsula, but nowhere were they at all massive or conspicuous.

The peninsula itself was rugged and high, and many acres in extent. A flock of sheep was pasturing there, and the ground was bright in many places with clumps of sea-pinks. The waves were continually foaming at the base of the headland, and the rocks were very ragged and hollowed into many huge caverns. Whenever I approached the edge of the precipices, I would startle the jackdaws from their crannies, and numbers of sea-gulls would fly out from the face of the cliffs and would soar and hover about and scream till I went

away. The day was not at all cheerful. The sky was full of clouds and flying mists through which stole, at intervals, pale gleams of sunshine. The sea was mottled with the glistening patches of light mov-

The Remains of King Arthur's Castle

ing across its general gray, and often these oases of light on the water seemed to promise that the day was brightening, but it never did. I lingered for a long time about the high cliffs and deep ravines in the castle neighborhood and, not till the evening dusk was deepening into night, did I return to my stopping-place.

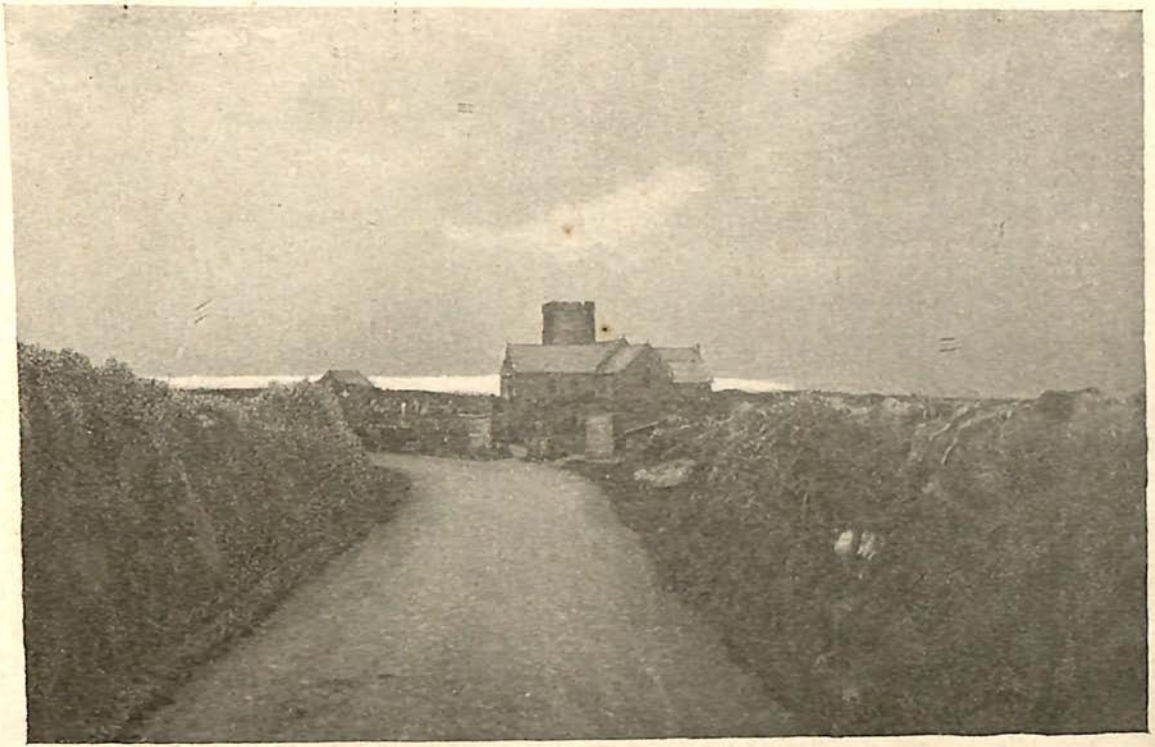
I was none too soon, for almost immediately afterward the cloud mists drooped low over the hills and it began to rain.

Next day I wandered about the castle region again and spent some time in one of the caves that the sea has hollowed deep under the old ruins that crown the cliffs far above. This particular cave went clear through the neck of the castle peninsula, and as I sat near its northern end, amid the stones and seaweeds still wet with a recent high tide, I could hear the waves continually surging in at the southern entrance with a hollow roaring like distant thunder. Once in a while there would come an intonation of a breaking wave so loud that I would prepare to get out in the fear of being inundated. These proved to be false alarms, but the cavern was too chilly and damp to make it desirable quarters for long, and I was content to leave it presently and climb to the upland.

A quarter of a mile from the castle is Tintagel church off on a flat hilltop all by itself with no houses or trees anywhere near. Immediately about it is a large churchyard set full of gray slabs of slate and surrounded by a grim stone wall. This, with the many other stone walls of the vicinity hemming in the roadways and bounding the fields, made the scene barren and lonely to the last degree. I never saw a church with a more forbidding environment.

After seeing Tintagel I went by carriage to Camelford, and thence continued by train to Okehampton, a good-sized village on the edge of Dartmoor Forest. I arrived at the latter place just in time to see a Salvation Army group beginning to hold forth on the chief town street. The Salvation soldiers were standing in a circle, and, one at a time, they stepped into the middle of the ring and made their appeal. They shouted at the top of their voices, but, even then, unless you stood very near you could not hear what they said. Only a thin row of lookers-on standing on the sidewalk curbing, paid any attention to them. People sauntered up and down the pavements, went into the shops and came out, children played, and small boys blew their whistles, and a man not far off with a little cart had gathered to him the larger part of the street loiterers, by his praises of a silver polish whose virtues he was illustrating. Such evening scenes I often saw, for the army has its little band of soldiers in every English village of any size.

In the early morning of the day following I went for a long walk over Dartmoor. I had only to climb the hill that swept far up back of the village to enter at once on characteristic moorland. It lay before me as far as the eye could reach, a waste of black stony hills heaving up mountain high about the wide and hardly less bare and rocky valleys. No dwellings and



Tintagel Church

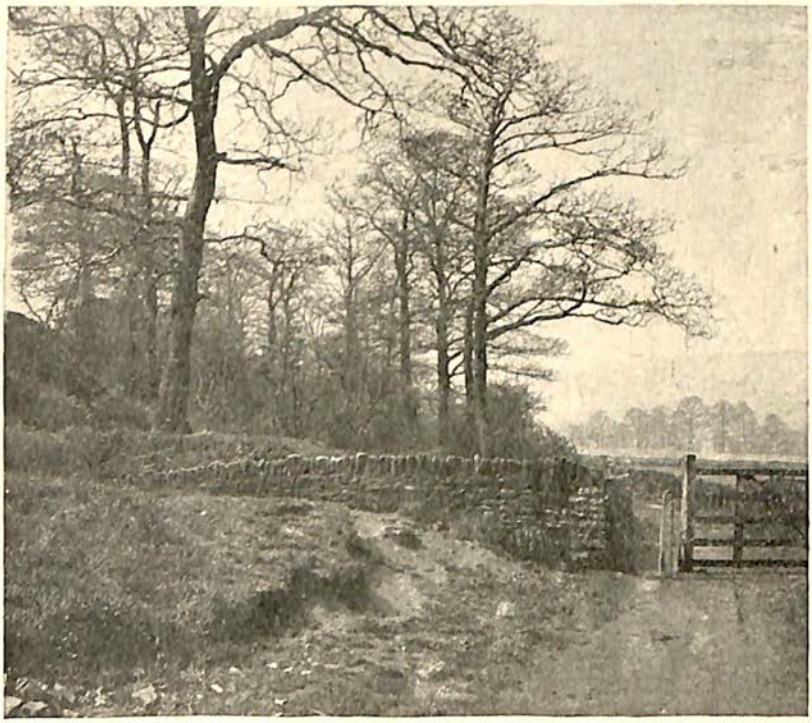
no trees or bushes broke its monotony, and the only life to be seen was scattered groups of horses, sheep, or cattle. In the hollows were brooks, and on the hill summits shattered cliffs of granite that looked like ancient ruins.

After penetrating far enough into Dartmoor to get some idea of its nature, I returned to Okehampton and took a train that by night had carried me clear across the southern counties of the kingdom to the east coast, and this brought my touring to a close. It was the longest uninterrupted trip I had made, but not the less pleasant on that account. A railroad journey in England seems to give a much more attractive view of the country traversed than a like journey on American railroads. The garden-like aspect of the country is always apparent, and it begins at once with the hedgerows that separate the narrow ribbon of railroad property from the private domains beyond.

If one can choose, I think the outlook from the car window is finest in early June. Every field then is besprinkled with blossoms, and they grow in starry constellations in every hedgerow. In some places the flowers are present in such multitude that it seems as if the blossoming masses on the high banks by the railroad must be jarred loose and come tumbling down on the train.

But whether seen in June or some other month the

country is delightful always. It looks as if it had passed the raw stage — as if wild nature was tamed to



An English Wood

a park-like submission. I almost never saw any land unreclaimed or even crudely cultivated. The fields were all smooth, and the woodlands, too, appeared to have care and did not grow in random tangles. Where a patch of wood was cut off, the ground was cleared afterward and not left a brushy devastation to start

again as chance willed. Great numbers of sheep, horses, and cows are seen feeding in the clean, well-grassed fields. I doubt if there could be found anywhere between John o'Groat's House and Land's End a pasture of the scrubby, weedy, barren-soiled sort we are so familiar with in New England. The whole English country impresses the traveller deeply with its quiet pastoral beauty, and one feels that Nature on this island is a lavish mother It seemed to me that any man to whom England had once been home must always love it and always feel a longing home-sickness when away from it. The land is one that readily wins the affections of strangers from across the seas, and however often they visit it, they always have the hope to see it yet once more.

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